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Long Beard, the Giant Spy; OR, HAPPY HARRY, THE WILD BOY OF THE WOODS.

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AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HURRICANE," "OLD SOLI-
TARY," "LITTLE TEXAS," "EAGLE
KIT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. HAPPY HARRY.

In the depths of the trackless forest bordering upon Lake St. Clair, over half a century ago, a score of birds held a concert or merry-making, one July afternoon. At least so it would have seemed to a casual observer, for never sung birds merrier than those assembled in that great, green oak. Birds of brilliant

plumage, birds of somber wings, birds of sweetest song, and birds that could only twitter, were assembled there—hopping, fluttering, and frolicking among the branches as though the happiest creatures on earth. And at the same time, each one kept its eyes turned downward as if watching some thing or some person. And so it was. They were watching a human being—a boy who was seated upon a fallen tree-trunk regarding them with a glow of admiration in his blue eyes.

A gun lay across his lap, and a large dog crouched at his feet. He was amusing himself with the feathered assembly above. When one sung, he whistled in exact imitation. He mimicked them all. He sung, twittered, and chirped as they did. He had called each one there by its own peculiar song, and it had come as if to greet a long-lost mate.

Birds have almost a human sociability, and love the society of man more than any of the animal kind. There seems to be a mutual and sympathetic attraction existing between mankind and the birds of the air. And of this, the boy on the log was fully aware. He

courted the society of his winged associates. He had been reared with them, as it were. Ofttimes, when alone, he called them around him, through medium of his wonderful powers of imitation, and sung and whistled with them as though they were a band of rollicking boys.

This youthful personage could not have been over sixteen years of age. His form was lithe and slender, yet it was easily seen that he was as strong, wiry, and supple as a young panther. There was a fresh, healthful glow on his smooth brown face, and a twinkle of boyish mischief, combined with a spirit of adventure, in his soft blue eyes. And although he would scarcely draw a hundred pounds of avoirdupois, there was nothing effeminate about his physique or features; and stripped of that halo which radiated from the boy, he would not have been considered handsome. It was the expression of the face and the light of the eye that one would have admired. There was nothing deep or hidden in his looks. His was one of those good, honest, spirited souls that lay revealed upon the surface. Love of adventure was one of the most predominant traits of his character, com-



"HULLO, MY LITTLE WAIF, YOU ARE SAFE, THANK GOD!" SAID THE GIANT, ADVANCING TOWARD HIM.

bined with the many elements that go to make up one of those odd, humorous, and jovial fellows often met with on the border and in the wilderness. A dimple lurked at each corner of his mouth that seemed ready, at the least provocation, to give way to a hearty laugh. Mischief cropped out on every feature, and the whole was slightly tinged with an expression bordering on the comical, to which a prominent Roman nose gave additional strength.

The youth was dressed in buckskin pants and overshirt, which were ornamented around the knees, up the seams, and around the shoulders with a fringe of the same material. His feet were incased in leather moccasins, and his head covered with a three-cornered hat, which he wore cocked back jauntily upon his head.

He was armed with a rifle, a brace of pistols, and a hunting-knife. A powder-horn and bullet-pouch hung at his side by means of a strap passing over his shoulder and across his breast. Upon the breech of his rifle was cut in rude characters the name—

"HAPPY HARRY."

The dog crouched at the youth's feet was a huge mastiff of the St. Bernard breed, considerably larger in every respect than his master, and possessed of prodigious strength.

For fully an hour the youth sat amusing himself with the birds that sported around him; but, growing tired of this, he arose and sauntered away leisurely through the woods, his dog following at his heels. As he advanced the forest seemed to deepen around him, and the gloom to thicken.

"Great hornits, Belshazzar," the lad suddenly exclaimed, addressing his dumb companion, "this here woods are gittin' to be a reglar black wilderness; it is, for a sublime fact. Sin wouldn't breed here worth a cent, so we needn't look fur sinners. Don't s'pose there's a red-skin within ten miles of us. But, keep up spirits, 'Shazzar; we'll soon reach St. Clair's boom'n' shores, where the huge leviathan gambols not and the green-headed frog warbles his dulcet lay to the lugubrious mud-turtle. We've had a tramp to-day all for nothin', but then, as we're eternally and always on the go, wharfore's the difference? But come, Belshazzar; let's amble along, my hearty, and mebbey we'll find somethin' yet to take the melancholy out of your downcast spirits."

So saying, Happy Harry turned and resumed his journey through the woods, whistling a sprightly air—apparently totally oblivious to the terrible fact that death and danger stalked abroad in all the dark woods bordering on the Northern lakes—that the red-man prowled upon every hand in search of enemies, with a murderous intent in his heart—a murderous look upon his dusky brow. He glided swiftly through the undergrowth and along the tangled mazes of the dense, dark thicket with the ease and familiarity of one whose life had been spent in threading the byways of the wilderness. At the same time, however, he manifested none of that habitual precaution of the born frontiersman in his movements. Indifference to unknown dangers was one of the youth's modes of guarding against that danger. His careless movements were not, however, unpremeditated; nothing within range escaped his keen, hawk-like eyes. He searched every bush and thicket as he advanced, and allowed nothing to give him undue excitement. He was thoroughly learned in the lore of the woods. He knew every voice of the wilderness, and could interpret the meaning of every sound, even to the rustle of a bush. He was a natural student of nature; nothing escaped his eyes and ears; and from the most insignificant thing he could always pick a grain of knowledge.

As the lad moved on his attention was suddenly attracted by a low growl of his canine friend. He ceased whistling, but never slackened his pace in the least. For all he knew the dog had warned him of danger; it was a part of his tactics to avert it by a seeming disregard of things around him. But, as he continued to advance, Belshazzar manifested greater uneasiness, and he finally concluded it was best not to be too incautious.

"What is it, Bell? what do you see?—hear? smell?" he said, stopping and turning to his dog.

The dog uttered a low bark, and plunging on ahead, disappeared from sight. In a few moments, however, he came bounding back to his master's side in no little excitement.

"Hoppin' hornits! what's up, Belshazzar? And munificent Moses! thar's blood on your snuzzle, thar is, for an awful fact."

To be certain, however, the boy examined the dog's nose more closely, and, true enough, found a slight stain of blood upon it. As there was no scratch or abrasion from which the blood could have oozed, the lad was satisfied it had been put there during the momentary absence of the animal. What did it imply? Surely something was wrong, and the youth set out to investigate the matter. He sent the dog on ahead. The animal led him into a dark, dismal thicket, then stopped and began sniffing and whining in a suspicious manner around some old dead leaves that had been recently raked into a long heap and

weighted down with some green boughs cut from a neighboring bush.

Happy Harry uttered a low whistle of surprise as he scrutinized the pile of dry leaves, that resembled a newly-made grave in its proportions. Then he glanced carefully around him, through the thicket, into the tree-tops, as though he felt sure some one was watching him. But not a sign of life was visible anywhere.

The dog continued his sniffing around the mound of leaves, now and then jumping back as if with affright, and uttering a low whining bark.

"Hoppin' hornits, 'Shazzar! what do you mean? What you treed thar, pup? a serpent? a sick bear? or a red-skin? Which are it? Speak right out."

"Bow-wow!" barked the dog, scratching at the heap.

"Great hoppin' hornits!" burst from his lips, as a human groan broke suddenly upon his ears. Then he gazed around him as if to see from whence came the sound. But all was silence and shadows. The presence of death could not have thrown more gloom around the youth than that strange cry. His eyes finally became fixed upon the heap of leaves before him. He spoke to his dog. The sagacious animal seemed to comprehend his very thoughts, and bounding forward, he thrust his muzzle into the brown heap. In an instant he withdrew it, and from the depths of the frail covering he drew forth a *human hand*! It was a small brown hand with tapering fingers and a wrist encircled by a hoop of gold—a woman's hand beyond a doubt—a hand that was still warm and aquiver with life!

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HARRY FOUND UNDER THE LEAVES.

HAPPY HARRY was completely dumfounded, and it was fully a minute before he could get his thoughts to work. And then, but for the presence of blood on the little dusky hand, lying so limp and yet so graceful on the pile of leaves before him, he would have believed that there was some movement on foot to entrap him. But a low moan of agony, which could not have been otherwise than the true expression of pain, dispelled all feelings from his breast save deepest sympathy and kindness, and advancing to the leafy mound, he bent over it, and began carefully raking the leaves away. He soon came to the form to which the hand belonged. It was that of an Indian girl. She was wrapped in a blanket, and, to all outward appearances was dead.

"Here, Bell," the lad said to his dog, "take hold and carry this gal out of these graveyard shadders."

He gathered the four corners of the blanket together and placed them in the mouth of his dog. The powerful mastiff lifted the form of the maiden as easily as though she were a child. He carried her out of the thicket and some distance through the woods, when a grassy plot was pointed out to him by his master whereon to deposit his burden, which he did with almost human tenderness.

Harry saw that the maiden was still bleeding profusely from an ugly wound upon the head. She was totally insensible, but her wild, incoherent mutterings gave evidence of returning consciousness.

"Hoppin' hornits!" exclaimed the boy, in apparent perplexity, "here I am in a confounded predicament. I've got an elephant on my hands, I have for a mortal fact. And what the horned gallinippers am I goin' to do with the kitter? And, what's more, how came she here in this banged-up condition? She's an Ottawa, and 's got a 'tarnal ugly jolt on the cerebellum; but switched if she ar'n't the prettiest little Ingin squaw I ever seen. She's a royal diadem of a beauty. She's jist exquisite, and I'm goin' to do the fair thing by her, I am for a generous fact."

The maiden could not have been over sixteen years of age, and for an Indian was decidedly pretty, her face wearing a childlike simplicity. Her neck and arms were loaded with costly jewelry, and a wreath of flowers girded her brow. But these, as was also her black hair, were covered with blood that oozed from the deep gash on her head.

Harry examined the nature and extent of her injuries, which he decided must have been inflicted by the blow of a club or some heavy, blunt weapon. But who could be so heartless and cowardly as to strike a helpless girl down, he could not conceive, unless it was some resentful wretch of her own tribe whose love she had doubtless spurned, and who had resolved she should not favor another.

The young borderman took the blanket from about her form, and running back to a little stream he had recently crossed, dipped it into the water and returned to the maiden. He wrung some of the cool liquid from the blanket upon her head and temples. He bathed her brow and washed the blood from her face and hands with all care and tenderness. Then he stanchd the flow of blood with some lint from the blanket, and bound up the wound with a strip of her calico frock.

Under these kind ministrations she appeared to recover rapidly. She finally opened her eyes, gazed around her, uttered a startled cry, and again appeared to sink into unconsciousness. Harry saw, however, that she had fully recovered her senses and was only affecting insensibility, doubtless through fear of him.

"See here now," he burst out, in an expositing manner, "you needn't play that on me, Becky—I mean Lily-of-the-valley. I've done the fair thing by you—me and the pup has—and now, if you could appreciate it, and condescend to open them black eyes and address us kindly, we'd be superbly tickled. Oh, git out now! you needn't try to look through yer half-open peepers. We're not fools, and by the horned gallinippers, we'll up and leave you here if you don't recognize us as friends. Confound it! you're jist like all the girls. You'd die rather than do what I want ye to. That's feminine perversity out and out; it is, for a scandalous fact."

The maiden did not understand a word he said, or else was determined not to stir from her simulated insensible state; and after waiting a sufficient time for her to make up her mind in regard to the matter, he turned, called his dog and started away. It was not his intention to desert her entirely, for, as soon as he was out of sight, he slipped back and took a position behind a tree where he could watch her.

No sooner was the sly, terrified young girl assured that she was alone, than her eyes opened and glanced quickly around. Then she arose to a sitting posture and felt of her head and the bandage upon it; then she attempted to rise to her feet, but failed.

"You're purty weak yit, Lily-of-the-valley," suddenly broke upon her ears, and Happy Harry stepped from his covert, with a mischievous smile upon his face; "you'd better rest quiet an hour or so and you'll git stronger. Thar's a monstrous big leak on your head, and the best part of the gal's leaked away."

The maiden's eyes sought the ground, and a look of petulance overspread her face. She made no reply to Harry's remarks.

"Girl, have you got a tongue?" the lad asked, a little curtly. "It'd be a sublime satisfaction for me to know, it would, for an honest fact." He repeated the question in the Ottawa dialect.

The maiden looked up. She touched her head, and in a feeble tone, said:

"The young pale-face has saved Eeleelah's life."

"I'm slightly conscious of havin' done a little for you by way of keepin' you from the land of your forefathers; but how did you git hurt, Eeleelah?"

She shook her head, which act Harry accepted as a refusal to answer him.

"Wal, it's all right," he moralized; "them as has their sekrets can stick to 'em. It makes no odds to me. It's a monstrous queer world this is, for an embellished fact."

A low growl from his dog started him, and turning, he saw a man approaching at a leisurely pace. He was an entire stranger to the boy; moreover, he was dressed and painted as an Indian; but Harry was too well versed in the movements of an Indian not to see that the new-comer was a white man in disguise. He was a young man, with a rather handsome face, a rakish air, and a dark-gray eye, that was not altogether pleasing to the critical mind of the young border-boy. But, concealing his dislike, he exclaimed, in a frank, open tone:

"Hullo, here! Howdy, stranger?"

"No reason to complain, sir," responded the stranger, glancing at the youth, then at his dog; "but how's this—that ornery-lookin' big cur bite?"

"Softly, gently, respectfully, stranger, speak of that dog," replied Harry, waving the man back. "That pup is sagacious—he's sensitive, and all creation couldn't stop him if he took a notion to masticate you. Hoppin' hornits! that little critter has fainted away ag'in; she has, for a bitter fact."

It was the girl of whom he now spoke. She had fallen prostrate in a swoon, and now lay like one dead.

"Hullo! what you got there? A sick Ingin, ar'n't it?" asked the stranger, as his eye fell upon the maiden's form.

"Sick? why, sick's no name for it. Some cowardly devil has nigh about bu'sted her head open, stranger. Thar's an awful gash on it, and I'm afeard the poor young thing will not see her way through. I found her out here in a thicket, covered with old leaves. But I'm goin' to do my best for her, for she's the purtiest Ingin I ever sot my eyes on. But, looky here, stranger, why are you trigged out like a bloody Ottawa?"

"I find it convenient to one's scalp in this outlandish country," responded the man.

"Well, who be you?"

"Abel Doyle; and you?"

"I'm a royal young sap-sucker—a descendant of the children of Adam, and am called Happy Harry."

"Ay! the Wild Boy of the Woods?"

"Yes, or any other man."

"Don't you know there's a price on your head?"

"Of course I do, for a clear fact."

"And do you know what for?" Doyle continued.

"To be sure I do," responded Harry, seating himself on the ground.

"I dare say you do not know."

"Well, set down and I'll tell you all 'bout it, Abel. You see, I used to live and fly a kite up in northern Injanny, at a place called Gomorrah. There was a log school-house thar, with long log benches that'd carry a dozen thinish-like boys. I war goin' to school thar when the thing happened. I war a real likely scholar, Abel, and could jist rattle off 'incomprehensibiliousness' without takin' breath or battin' my eyes once clear through. I'd 'a' bin a spankin' good scholar if I'd kept on, and by this time I might 'a' bin a preacher or a dancin'-master. But that little affair played the deuce. You see, Peggy Long war as sweet on me as a bee on clover, and I jist despised the donged old thing. She was only ten years older'n me, and uglier than a bullfrog on a mud fence. She war always stickin' her ole nose in atwixt me and Sally Beems, and that made me hornit mad. And one day she up and slipped her gum, that she'd been wallerin' atween her jaws for six months, into my hand, and said, with an expirin' smile, that I might use it till recess. Whiz! it made me mad as a hoppin' hornit; and so, when ole Peg went to recite her lesson, I basted her gum on the bench whar she sot, and when she come back, down she dabbed herself on it, and she had on her fix-up dress, too. But, things run along awhile, and nearly all the boys on my bench got to laffin' and titter'n 'bout Peg's gum; then ole Bilkins, the teacher, seed us, and you ort to 'a' hearn his long dogwood stick rattle down off the joist. Whew! he swung the pisen thing on high, and, oh, hornits! how ten coat-tails, all strung along nicely on the same seat, did flip up, as that ole dogwood warped down upon us. Some of the boys war studiyin' away like old philosophers, and wasn't expecting the gad, but they got it, and I tell ye it h'isted 'em deliciously.

"When one boy on a bench that way gits to cuttin' up, the rest might as well pitch in and have their little fun, too, for they're sure to git their sheer of the dogwood. I never keered if I war in the middle or next to the teacher; but, Lord, Abel! was it ever your ghastly misfortune to sit on t'other end of the bench and have a loose end of the switch hug right up till it'd h'ist a blister every warp? If you haven't, I have, and I'll be bung if it don't smart till a feller can see little rings floatin' out of his eyes. Aside from the dogwood, Abel, a school-house is a dull place for me. I allers could sleep soundly in one, and even now the sight of one makes me drowsy. Somethin' queer 'bout that, ar'n't it, stranger?"

"I'll admit it is, in your case at least," replied Doyle, somewhat interested in the lad's story; "but you have lost the main thread of your story. You commenced to tell about the reward."

"Well, yes, I war comin' to that," continued Harry. "After ole Bilkins had given us boys a good bastin', and regulated his system, he returned to his class. Elevating his spectacles on his forehead, he bawled out:

"Can any one tell me how the deestric township of Gomorrah is bounded?"

"On the north by Pole-cat crick, south by Muskeeter swamp," squeaked Peg Long, bouncin' to her feet, when rip went her dress. The gum had stuck it, and snatched out a strip the hull length of the skirt. The boys began to giggle, the girls to titter behind their books, Peg to cry, an' ole Bilkins to champ his bits. Down rushed the old dogwood switch with a rash-ee-tee-swash, and then, in tones of thunder, the culprit was called for. I had a notion to lay it to Dicky Howes, but then I thought of Georgie Washington and his hatchet, and I riz to my feet and told the hull truth like a little man, thinkin' it would induce ole Bilky to ease up on me. But, hoppin' hornits! you'd ort to 'a' seen the old tiger pant! He fairly danced, he war so mad. 'I'll larn ye,' he whistled, as he let his glasses fall to the floor, and before he could pick 'em up, one of the boys brushed 'em aside with his foot, another picked 'em up and passed 'em to the next, and in two seconds they were on t'other side of the house on Billy Trotter's face; but, you bet, Billy kept his big geography spread out well before his face, and winked at us boys around the corners. But the loss of his glasses give ole Bilkins a mad fit. 'Veneration,' he yelled, like an Ojibway squaw, 'you, Harry Wilde, will provoke me to your destruction. My blood's b'ilin' hot, and I b'lieved him, stranger, for I thought I could hear it blubberin' in his veins; and so I concluded to make myself rare in that place, and so out I jumped at a winder and away I went. And out bounced ole Bilky, and away he started after me. I tell you, it war fun alive for the other boys to see ole Bilky's game legs go wabblin' across the meadow like wheels out of dish. Even old Peg Long mopped out her eyes and swung her handkercher and yelled like a sick wild-cat.

Wal, I took to'rds the creek whar I knowed thar war a deep hole, and jist as I reached the bank I dodged ahind a big tree. In a minute the ole pettygog came tearin' up like a whirlwind and sweatin' like a Turk. He thought I'd dodged down into the water, or under the bank, and so he walked up and was leanin' over lookin' for me, when I slipped up behind him and dumped him into the water. It was mean in me, I know, but I done it to cool his blood. It'd 'a' made a wooden man laff to see him spout water. Oh, it war de-lightful, stranger, and I nearly killed myself laffin'. But ole Bilky got out and—so did I. He swore out a s'arch-warrant, or some law thing, to have me arrested for murder, and so I jist come off out here to look around St. Clair awhile. And I understand Bilkins offers five dollars reward for my arrest."

"Just so," responded Doyle, with a tinge of sarcasm which Harry did not fail to detect. He had also noticed that, while he was relating his story—which was told more to throw Doyle off his guard than any other object—Doyle had kept a continual watch upon the motionless form of the Indian girl with manifest uneasiness. Harry also stole a glance now and then at the face of the maiden, and being situated so that he could see her features distinctly, he was not a little surprised to see that she was only feigning unconsciousness, and watching Doyle through her half-open eyes. This led Harry to believe that the two were not strangers to each other, and in order to bring the matter to a point, he said:

"Stranger, I s'pose you know who that gal is, seein' she's an Ottawa and you a Huron."

"I know nothing of the girl. The village of the Ottawas is far from that of the Hurons."

"S'pose, then, you're hunting down this way?"

"Well, yes," responded the man, with some hesitation.

"That's what we're doin'—that's me and Belshazzar. I tell you, Abel, that dog makes a strong old fight. You'd ort to see him handle the jugular of an Ottawa or—"

"Huron, I presume," interrupted Doyle.

"No, stranger; me and the Hurons are friends."

"You were, but are not now."

"And why not?"

"You haven't heard that the United States has declared war against Great Britain, and hostilities have opened, and that the Hurons have taken sides with the latter?"

"Great hoppin' hornits! No! I never heard it hinted before. But, munificent Moses! won't it make times brisk? Of course you side with us, don't you, stranger?"

"Do you mean the American Republic?"

"Well, yes, seein' we're a fraction of the republic—American citizens."

"What organization do you represent?"

"Why, stranger, you puzzle me. I don't know that I represent any other than the anatomical organization of Happy Harry."

"My lad, I am inclined to doubt your word. Don't you know something about an organization of doubtful character called the 'Fishermen's Union'?"

"Why, great hornits! how you talk, man! That 'Fishermen's Union' is nothin' but a band of lake pirates that come over into the United States to steal, and then seek refuge under the English flag in Canada."

"Admitting that to be true, you haven't answered my question, sir," Doyle persisted.

"I would be a fool to answer it if it were so," was Harry's swift rejoinder.

"Look here, my boy; you know more than you pretend. It's not a schoolmaster's reward that is on your head," and Doyle glanced furtively at the youth, then at the inanimate form of Eeleelah.

"Stranger, you mustn't insinuate; you do me injustice," and Harry's face assumed a look of deep earnestness.

With a contemptuous smile upon his painted face, Doyle rose to his feet, and turning, walked slowly and with massive tread away into the woods.

Scarcely was his back turned ere Eeleelah sprung to her feet, and, hurrying to Harry's side, said, in the Ottawa dialect:

"Pale-face flee! He is a bad, wicked man. He will kill you, as he thought he had done me."

As the last word fell from her lips, she turned and hurried away as fast as her feeble strength would permit.

Happy Harry was astounded by this turn of affairs and startling revelation. He glanced first after the girl, then after the renegade. He saw the latter suddenly stop, turn toward him and raise his right hand. He saw a puff of smoke, and nothing more. Something blurred his vision; his brain reeled, and, tottering, the Wild Boy of the Woods sunk heavily to earth.

With a mournful howl his dumb companion sprung forward, and, crouching by his side, sent forth a lamentation of grief that seemed almost human in its sad, sorrowful intonations.

Abel Doyle, the assassin, turned and fled into the woods as if from the vengeance of the inscrutable God.

CHAPTER III.

SURPRISES.

THE shadows of night hung low and dark over the forest bordering on the western shore of Lake St. Clair. The sky was overcast with a dull, hazy mist. A damp, heavy wind stirred the great oaks and pines into an ominous murmur. Not far away the surge of the heavy waves could be heard breaking upon the rock-bound shore with a sullen boom. From afar off came the long howl of a wolf, alternating with the to-whit-to-who of an owl. The dull droning of nocturnal wings and the chirp of insects pervaded the night. Nature was enjoying a sweet repose. The mysterious voices in the wilderness were but the gentle breathings of her great night-enshrouded bosom.

Through the murky gloom came the twinkle of a light that burned almost under the falling spray of St. Clair's breakers. It was a dim red light, appearing and disappearing at intervals as though it came from a building whose door was being opened and closed. This was, in a measure, the case. The building, though, was one of canvas. It was a small, conical tent. The light was reflected from a lantern that hung inside the structure, which was built upon a little sand-bar projecting out into the waters of a narrow bay.

Two persons occupied the tent. Both were white men. The eldest, a man of fifty years, was dressed in the suit of a borderman, which contrasted well with his uncouth appearance. He was a low, heavy-set man, with cold, gray eyes and a bearded face that would not bear the closest scrutiny. He was a jovial companion, however, and was admired by his companion for his whimsical humor and odd talk. He was armed with a rifle, pistols and knife.

This man answered to the name of Bill Mucklewee.

The other person was a young man of about three and twenty years, and bore evidence of mental culture and refinement in both feature and language. Of rather prepossessing general appearance, he was a little above medium height, with a military bearing in his movements, but nothing arrogant or haughty, for his countenance was open and pleasant. He wore a long cloak, beneath which was the uniform of a captain of the United States army. A sword hung at his side, while a pair of polished pistol-butts peeped from their receptacle in his girdle.

This man was Captain Robert Rankin.

In the bay just back of their encampment a little sail-boat lay at rest on the waves. This was the property of the young captain. All that day had he and his companion traveled upon the lake, going ashore only when darkness set in, feeling entirely disposed to run the risks of the dangers of land rather than those of a night on rough waters.

From their conversation it was evident that young Rankin was a stranger in those parts, and that Bill Mucklewee, the hunter and trapper, was acting in the capacity of guide to him.

Although the old borderman had been first to advocate the idea of spending the night ashore, he could not rest easy after they had gone into camp. He seemed apprehensive of danger and kept up a continual dodging in and out of the tent to watch and listen.

"Friend guide," said Rankin, "are you not giving yourself undue trouble regarding our situation?"

"You can't be too keefer, cap'n, in this dashed Ingin country," the trapper-guide responded. "Thar's been red-skins, as I've said before, in this vicinity within the last twenty-four hours, and they may be around yet somewhar."

"But I should think you were nearly exhausted with the day's journey."

"Exhossted! Old Bill Mucklewee exhossted! Why, dash it to thunder, cap'n, do you take me for an old woman? Bless my eyes, I hardly 've got warmed up. I'm like an old spavined stage-hoss; the longer I go the nimbler I git. It takes at least twenty hours hard drivin' to warm the jint grease in my corporosity. But, cap'n, I never did take to water like a duck. It's too confining. A feller can't git exercise enough. Now, we've not traveled over fifty miles to-day, and I could 'a' beat that afoot, dashed if I couldn't."

"I dare say you could, friend guide; but I am no traveler. Moreover, I was confident that the enemy was watching me, and would attempt to follow, so I thought I would take the way that would leave no trail, and bring me soonest to the destination I am so anxious to reach."

"Yes, cap'n," replied Mucklewee, a curious smile playing over his bearded face; "I see you are very anxious to get to Laketown. I reckon thar must be some purty gal drawin' you up thar."

"Not at all, Bill. I am heart-free. The lives of the settlers is the object of my journey to Laketown."

"Cap'n, I can't see why the people of Laketown are in any more danger than they have been for years. The cussed Injuns are all the time on the rampage, but they're no wusser now than they ever war."

"Friend guide, you live most of your time in the forest. You know little of what is going on in the busy world, consequently you can have no idea of the important dispatches I am bearer of to the good people of Laketown, as well as all other points along the shores of St. Clair."

"Indeed, cap'n?"

"Yes, indeed; though I should not have said so much, even to my guide. But then I intrust this much of my secret to you in confidence."

"It's thar, cap'n, buried deep," replied the guide, laying his hand upon his breast. "I never go back on a friend, dashed if I do—but there—whist!"

Something like the crack of a dry stick started them. Mucklewee rose to his feet, took up his rifle, and glided out into the night.

In a few minutes he returned.

"Any discovery?" asked Rankin.

"Not a dashed thing could I hear, see, or smell."

"I'm glad of it. I wouldn't have an enemy hear what I told you for a fortune."

"No danger, Robert, of an enemy hangin' around here listenin'. If thar's any about, they'll not hesitate to bulge right in onto us like and dash off our hair in two twinkles of a lightnin'-bolt."

"I'm afraid we're getting a little nervous, Bill, for want of refreshments," said Captain Rankin, "so we may as well take our rations now as any time."

He opened a small provision bag, from which he took some biscuits, cold meat, and a flask of brandy. Both fell to and made a hearty meal upon the cold viands, in the mean time discussing the events of the day in a low tone.

They had about concluded their repast when a soft step was heard without, and the next instant the flap door was thrust aside, and a head, in which was set a pair of gleaming eyes and a double row of white, glittering teeth, was protruded within the tent.

It was the head of a great, shaggy beast. Its jaws were open, its red tongue protruding from the mouth from which the hot saliva was almost streaming. It was panting as though exhausted from sheer exertions.

"What in thunder is it, cap'n?" questioned the borderman, drawing back as if with fright.

"You tell," responded Rankin, grasping his revolver.

"Bow-wow-wow!" barked the animal in a deep and thunderous tone that fairly shook the ground. It seemed to have comprehended the two men's want of information.

"By heavens, it's a dog, Bill!" exclaimed Rankin.

"It is, I'll be dashed to atoms; and what an awful big critter it is. But, cap'n, I'll swar I believe it's rantin' mad."

"Bow-wow!" barked the mastiff again, and he withdrew his head and disappeared in the gloom of night.

Rankin and the old borderman rose and went out. All was silence, but in a moment they heard the patter of the dog's feet coming back. They waited his approach. He came running up to them, in a friendly yet excited manner. He barked softly. He rubbed around their feet and whined uneasily; then he bounded away again into the woods. In a few moments he came back and went through the same maneuvers and disappeared as before. He went in the same direction every time—going entirely beyond their hearing.

"Well, what the mystery does it mean, anyhow?" Rankin asked, somewhat puzzled.

"I'll be dashed to thunder if I can tell ye," Mucklewee answered, not a little surprised himself.

"I'd like to understand it."

As if in answer to Rankin's remarks, a sound resembling a cry of distress came to their ears.

"Dash it, cap'n! sumthin's up, sure as death—somebody is in trouble! That dog's got a sight of human gumpshun, Rankin. He wants help—help for his master. Here he comes again."

True enough; the pattering footsteps of the dog were heard approaching again, and in a moment he was fondling around them, whining with an eager, kind impatience.

When he started off again, Rankin said:

"Let's try and follow him up, Bill. He don't go far."

"Nuff said—here goes."

They set off after the animal, and had gone but a little way, when that cry of distress was again heard, a short distance before them.

"Oh, hoppin' hornits! hor-nits! h'nts!" wailed the unknown sufferer.

"Hullo, stranger; what's the matter?" Mucklewee called out in a partially subdued tone.

"Glory! glory!" was the glad response.

"What's the matter, I say?" again demanded the guide.

"Oh, great hornits! I'm dead, stranger!—dead as a door nail, I am for a fact. Who be you? Whar ye goin'? Are ye the Old Nick after me?"

"No; we follered your dog out here; do ye

want help?" demanded Mucklewee, and the two men advanced to the side of the prostrate sufferer, whose voice denoted his youthfulness.

"Well, I don't know as help will do me much good, strangers, unless you help me out of this plagued unlucky world," was the response. "I've been shot by a 'tarnal villain that I'll foller to purgatory that I may haunt him, I will for a burning fact. Yes, strangers, I'm down flat on my back. The vampire brought me flat, and if it hadn't been for Belshazzar, my noble ole dog, the wolves'd had me sandwiched long afore this."

"Who are you? and what are you doing here?" queried Captain Rankin.

"I'm Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods, stranger; but if ever there was an unhappy young devil, it's me. The varlet's shot was a bunglin' thing—it only carried away one side of my head. How much nicer I'd feel if it had been plum-center—took my hull summit off, smack and smooth."

"My lad, let us help you to our tent, and we'll see what can be done to alleviate your suffering," said Rankin.

"Do so, strangers, and if thar is sich a thing as speakin' a good word for another in heaven, I'll not forgit you fellers, if I go that way. I know a feller can't live long with one side of his head off."

Mucklewee advanced, and stooping over the youth took hold of his shoulder to raise him up, when Belshazzar uttered a growl, and manifested a disposition to object to the guide's liberty with his young master.

"See here, boy, make that ole grizzly growler subside, or I'll let you drap," said Mucklewee.

"It's all right, Belshazzar," the youth said, addressing his dog. "Don't take on, ole pard, and mebbey we'll git patched up so's we can gyrate a while longer. Stranger"—addressing Mucklewee—"jist git me up onto my feet and let me lean on you, and then I guess I can walk. I'm lopped-sided as thunder, on account of t'other half of me bein' gone. Yes, strangers, the hull section of my head war blown to atoms. Oh, hornits! it war a miserable, bunglin' shot, friends. I could 'a' done better with my hull head blown off, I could for a fact—ouch! here we go—steady, strangers."

"Thar arn't more'n enuff of ye to make a good wolf-bait, boy," Mucklewee said, as he started toward the tent, half-carrying, half-dragging the young borderman along.

"I'm no great shakes, stranger, for heft," Harry replied; "I never war, even when I had t'other half of my head, and ten gallons of blood that's leaked away."

"Dashed if you mustn't be about dry then, if you've lost sich a power of claret."

"Dry? why thar isn't a drop of blood in me. Every grain's been pumped out, and I'm as good as dead, I am for a fact."

Mucklewee laughed a dry sort of laugh, which was evidence of his disbelief of the youth being seriously hurt. It was so dark that they could not ascertain the extent of his injuries, although they were satisfied that his suffering greatly magnified the fact. However, they moved slowly on and finally reached the tent. The lad was laid upon a blanket and the light brought down and held so as to fall upon his head. There was blood upon his face and neck and upon his hands and in his hair, but to their happy surprise they found that he had merely sustained a flesh-wound across the skull. It was sufficient, however, to cause great pain and loss of blood, and there was no doubt in the minds of the men but that the boy believed one side of his head was gone.

Captain Rankin made the examination and reported the nature of the wound. Harry seemed wonderfully cheered and strengthened by the good news.

"Hoppin' hornits!" he exclaimed, rising easily to a sitting posture. "I thought I was killed, stranger. I was sure the hull side of my head was blown off by that bunglin', jackass shot. It's queer how one's feelin's will effect the imagination, ar'n't it?"

"It seems to be the case with you, at least; but was it an Indian or white man that attempted your life?"

"It war a white red-skin, stranger, and a ornery thief he war. A man that couldn't make a better shot than that is no business in this country. But I tell ye, I see'd stars and little rings about the time the bullet waltzed through my hair, and over I keeled, as superbly as you please. And I expect if it hadn't been for Belshazzar the fool 'd 'a' scalped me. I've laid out thar ever since four o'clock, or thereabouts, and that valiant old dog has stood over me. Oh, I tell ye, he's a noble brute, and sich strength—*when!*"

"He's a dashed ugly old brute," said Mucklewee, inclined to jest with the boy.

"Ugly? Great hoppin' hornits, stranger! you'd think he war ugly if he war to sock his teeth into your breathin' arrangements. He alers feels with a vengeance for a red-skin's jugler, he does for dead fact. But, friends, I'm monstrous glad you told me that I'm not much killed, and believin' it'll do me good to wash this blood off my hands and face, I be-

lieve I'll escort myself out to the water and dip in. Once cleaned up, you can see what I look like. I'm no great shakes for beauty, but I am purty good with a rifle. I can bring a deer, wing a bird, or bark a squirrel furdern' any other man on old St. Clair's howlin' shores."

"You can't do it, friend Harry," replied Mucklewee, "and I'll stake my moccasins on that."

"Shake on that, Mucklewee," said the youth, extending his hand; "and soon as mornin' comes we'll test the matter."

"Cap'n Rankin, you hear that?" cried the guide.

"I do."

The youth turned and walked out of the tent, followed by his faithful canine companion.

"Rankin," said Mucklewee, and his voice fell to a husky whisper, "that boy's been foolin' us. He knowed he wer'n't hurt bad, and jist like as any way hurt himself on purpose. He's a spy on our movements, dashed if I won't bet on it. He'll bear watchin'. He's gone out, mebbe to run off with our boat. Dashed if he ar'n't a sharper if he is a brat of a boy. But he's older and knows more'n one'd think. And that dog—dashed if he isn't a trained brute, I never—"

"Great hoppin' hornits!" exclaimed the boy, dashing suddenly into the tent; "friends, do you know you're in an all-fired predicament?"

Both men started to their feet, for they saw that Happy Harry was excited.

"What's the matter, lad?" questioned Rankin.

"Why, great hornits, man, you're in a trap! You're afloat on Lake St. Clair with a dozen bloody savages!"

CHAPTER IV.

LONG-BEARD.

"ANOTHER sell by that 'tarnal little imp," exclaimed Mucklewee, as he started toward the door of the tent; but, Rankin was convinced that there was something wrong, else the boy was the most perfect actor he had ever met.

The captain followed the guide out, and to his horror found that the youth had told the truth. The little sand-bar upon which they had pitched their tent had actually detached itself from the shore and was floating out into the bay! To add still more to the horrors and peril of the situation, our friends saw half a dozen savages scrambling out of the water upon the floating raft.

In an instant it flashed through the mind of Happy Harry that Rankin and his guide had, by some means or other, got themselves into a well-concealed trap. He saw that the supposed sand-bar was nothing more than a raft covered with sand and gravel, and joined to the main shore so artfully that one less skillful than Bill Mucklewee was supposed to be would never have detected the cunning arrangement. Moreover, it was dark when they landed, else they might have discovered that the little sand-bar was not a natural one; and, as there was no action of the water in the bay, the raft lay perfectly motionless, doubtless held by props under it in the water.

The trap was, in all probability, set for these two persons, but it was a mystery to Harry how the savages had anticipated the intended camping spot of the travelers so well; for the men knew not where they would camp ten minutes before they pitched their tent on the bar. There was something certainly remarkable about it; but there was no time for conjectures or idle words now. A conflict was at hand—a bloody hand-to-hand encounter.

Happy Harry gave utterance to a cry so much like that of a terrified eagle that Rankin involuntarily turned to him with a sudden start. The next instant the youth drew his pistols, and, bounding forward, opened the battle. The report of his weapons followed each other in quick succession. Belshazzar was close at his master's side, and in an instant was at a red-skin's throat.

Wild now rose the tumult of battle upon the night.

The cunning red-skins, seven in number, had, by this time, all gained the top of the raft. But they had evidently met one not calculated upon—in fact, two of them—Harry and his dog.

The raft had, by this time, drifted out into the misty moonlight, thereby enabling the foe to see where and upon whom to direct their blows.

Mucklewee and Rankin became engaged with four brawny warriors on the opposite side of the tent. The savages were entirely nude, with the exception of their loin-cloths. Clubs were their only weapons, which was further evidence that they had calculated upon an easy victory. They appeared to concentrate their main force against Rankin, as though his uniform was incentive to the deadliest vengeance. But the captain was a trained and skillful man, and with his sword held them well at bay.

Happy Harry and his dog soon succeeded in getting rid of their three combatants, when they hastened to the assistance of those on the other side. He had managed to get hold of one of the Indians' clubs, and with these he played

lively upon the tufted skulls of the warriors. By a flank movement the captain was finally brought down, and two of the warriors seemed intent upon taking him alive, and would, doubtless, have succeeded, had it not been for the quick blows of Harry's club and the rending teeth of Belshazzar.

While engaged in liberating Rankin, a figure rushed suddenly upon our hero with a horrible imprecation upon his lips, but the youth greeted him with a blow that sent him reeling overboard into the water. But it was not until it was too late that he discovered he had committed an irreparable blunder—that it was Mucklewee, the guide, he had struck. He regretted the act, but felt justified, for the reason that in the excitement of the moment Mucklewee was rushing upon him with deadly intent, no doubt mistaking him for an enemy.

By this time but three savages were left to contend with, and one of these Harry soon knocked overboard. Another was struggling hand-to-hand with the young soldier, while the third, seeing the havoc made in their ranks by Harry's club, rushed upon the youth and grappled him. Together they rolled on the raft in deadly conflict.

The savage was far the heavier and stouter, but Harry was the more skillful, and proved as difficult to handle as an eel. The youth's club being of no further use to him now, he dropped it and endeavored to draw his knife. But this he was unable to do, for the savage's arms in a measure pinioned his. His movements were also somewhat hampered by his rifle, which was hung at his back, but, despite these disadvantages, he fought like a young tiger, giving the red-skin all he wanted to do in the hand-to-hand grapple.

Finally the lad saw that the red-skin's weight was an advantage he could not overcome, and that he must endeavor to free himself, while strength remained, from the powerful arms of the savage. He threw all his strength into a single effort, but without success. The limbs of the foe were like welded bands of steel. They whirled to and fro across the raft in rapid evolutions. Harry squirmed and wriggled like a serpent, at the same time shouting defiance in the ear of his antagonist.

At length they struggled to their feet and went spinning away across the raft and fell overboard. Both sunk from view, but they soon appeared at the surface again, struggling all the fiercer now that the water was contending for the victory over both. They fought in silence—that is, no word escaped their lips, for they found it prudent to keep their mouths shut and the water from their lungs. Their flying limbs beat and churned the water into a foam.

Suddenly a loud, deep bark rung out, and was succeeded by a plunge. It was the dog, Belshazzar, who, seeming to comprehend the perilous situation of his master, bounded to his assistance. Nor was the faithful animal a moment too soon. Happy Harry was almost exhausted when the dog swam up and seized the red-skin by the throat, ending the conflict in a short time.

Keeping himself above water as well as he could in his almost breathless condition, until Belshazzar had dispatched the warrior, he then grasped the dog by the tail and was towed ashore.

Both dog and master were quite exhausted when they reached the bank, and crawling out of the water they threw themselves upon the beach for a moment's rest.

Harry now glanced out over the bay. He could see the raft and the two forms struggling in their death-throes upon it. The water in the bay was still, but at the same time there was a natural inclination of the current lake-ward and the raft gradually drifted down the bay until it reached the lake, when it soon was whirled by the current out on the bosom of the watery expanse.

"Great bald-faced hornits, 'Shazzar!" exclaimed young Harry, "there goes that poor young captain to destruction, and we unable to help him. But we've done our duty, Bell; we done all we could until we war teetotally discombarated. We're tired and wet as mops. It's a damper on us, old friend, and all because we're so unfortunate as to be boys. It always did seem to me that boys war the most persecuted set of critters that ever war inflicted on the world. And yet one can't jump out of boyhood into manhood; things hev got to take their natural course. Now, if we'd been gals, Bell, we'd not be here to night, but tucked away somewhar in a quiet nest of feathers and quilts. But what's the use to lament? a boy's a boy, and ye can't make anything else out of him. Besides, we enjoy all this as only boys can enjoy fun. But poor Rankin! I hope he'll get through all right with that red-skin. I want to tell him sumthin'—sumthin' that he'd never have suspected, old dog. They say boys have alers got their noses into other people's business, and know more'n they ort to; but, 'Shazzar, a feller's got to know a heap to travel thrc'gh this jassack of a country. Now, the captain may have a sight ov book larnin', and know all about handlin' a sword, and military things,

but they didn't help him to a knowledge of one thing—that is, of the border and its characters. If they only had, he'd not been trapped by a traitor!"

Belshazzar raised his eyes and gazed at the face of his young master as though he fully comprehended his words.

"Yes, Bell," continued the lad, "that man Mucklewee war a condemned traitor to Rankin, he was, for a cruel fact. It war him that had the trap arranged for the captain's reception. But, hoppin' hornits, 'Shaz, I give the low-browed wretch a jolt across the organum that sent him to water. I don't know whether he got out or not—nor I don't care; but I do know he is a black-hearted trai— Ah! now, Belshazzar, what is it, old pard?"

The dog started up with a low growl toward the woods.

The massive tread of a foot sounded near, and a moment later Happy Harry saw the giant figure of a white man appear from the dense shadows of the undergrowth.

"Great hoppin' hornits and glory!" shouted the youth, springing to his feet and advancing toward the intruder, "it is my big friend—my dear friend, Long Beard; it is, for a living fact!"

CHAPTER V.

THE LAKE SCUD.

THE man that stood before our young friend was full seven feet in height, and in the night appeared taller. He was built in proportion to his stature, with great muscular arms, swelling chest and massive form, to which a tremendous beard, reaching far down upon his breast, gave additional strength. But it was snow-white.

He was dressed in a suit half-civilized and half-savage, which gave his powerful form a formidable appearance. Fifty years had detracted nothing from his physical manhood, while his venerable beard and hair gave to him an air of wisdom and mental ripeness.

He was armed with a long "Kentucky" rifle, a brace of pistols and a hunting-knife; and as he appeared upon the beach he dropped the butt of his rifle to the ground, and, crossing his hands over the muzzle, gazed around him and at Harry and his dog in silent astonishment. He knew the Wild Boy of the Woods, and was astonished to see him there in the plight he was in. They had met before and had spent days together, but always in the forest. But neither one knew aught of the other's habitation, nor of his life beyond their first meeting in the wild-wood. It is true, Harry had heard something of a reputed giant, called Long Beard, that frequented the forest bordering on St. Clair, but as there are always so many stories prevalent on the border, of mysterious giants, avengers and spirits, he gave no credence to the report until he actually met the long bearded man himself.

Belshazzar growled fiercely and seemed inclined to arrest the man's further advance, but his master bade him be quiet, and he again laid down.

Seeing the giant did not reply to his greeting, Harry said:

"Long Beard, I am monstercously happy to meet you. I am for a golden fact."

"Why, Harry, my little fellow, are you lost? are you in trouble?" the giant asked, in a deep, measured tone.

"Me lost! hoppin' hornits, no, ginerel. But I'm wet—soakin' wet—me and Bell are. We've had the gol-awfulest, bloodiest, wickedest fight that ever took place on St. Clair's shores."

"Indeed! I thought I heard a fearful racket off hereaways," Long Beard said, with that same deep, measured tone; "but are you hurt, my boy?"

"Wuss than that, Big Beard, I'm tetotally tuckered out, demoralized. I was never so tired in all my life. I'm soakin' wet, and never felt so ornery in my life. But Je-whiz, we had a magnificent fight—me and Bell and the boys. It was superb, the way we reeled the red-skins off onto the great black skein of eternity. I tell ye, them Spartan fellers we read about doin' such big fightin' at—at Trigonometry couldn't hold a candle to us. But, Long Whiskers," and his voice fell to a serious tone, "I'm afraid one of the boys went under, while the other ort to 'a' died afore his mother war born."

"Why, Harry?"

"He war a pusillanimous, unrectified traitor, and betrayed his friend—a splendid young man with sojer clothes on."

"Harry, come with me; I want to know more about this affair. My boat lies off north of here. I will make a fire in the cabin, and while you are drying your clothes you can tell me of your day's adventure."

"That's fair, dogged if it arn't, Big Beard, and I guess I'll accept of your hospitality; for I don't feel any too much like laying around loose to-night. Times are revivin', ginerel; I guess thar's goin' to be war, sure enough."

"A war?" exclaimed Long Beard, turning suddenly upon the lad as if startled by his words; "what do you know about a war?"

"Why, hoppin' hornits, ginerel, haven't you heard of the war 'twixt this country and England?"

"I have not, Harry."

"Well, neither have I, ginerel; but I guess they'll arrange things for a high old squabble of a war, if they can agree on it."

A faint smile stirred the placid calmness of the giant's face, and he said:

"Come on, Harry, you will take cold in those wet clothes."

The youth and his dog followed him some distance along the shore, when they came to where the little schooner, rigged with sails, was tied up in a cove or bay. They went aboard, the boat was unfastened, sail hoisted, when the little craft glided out of the bay into the lake and sped away over its bosom.

The craft was about twenty feet in length by eight in width. Forward was a little cabin extending from the hatchway to about three feet above the deck. From the cabin to the rear extremity of the boat extended a long pole, or beam, parallel with the deck, and about two feet above it. It was attached to an upright post aft, but of what use it could be Harry could not imagine.

Long Beard conducted Harry and his dog down into the cabin, when he at once struck a fire on the elevated stone hearth in the apartment. The smoke and heat escaped through an opening in the roof.

The lad removed his outer garments and hung them around the fire to dry, substituting a blanket furnished by the giant in their place. He next turned his attention to his fire-arms. He drew the charge from his rifle and wiped the barrel dry. The contents of his powder-horn were perfectly dry, but those of his bullet-pouch were thoroughly soaked, but not materially damaged.

Meanwhile an animated conversation had been carried on between the man and boy.

"I've been in many predicaments, Big Beard," the youth finally said, when they touched upon the subject, "but this one to-night was the nastiest one I ever got into. I'm afraid Belshazzar thar will have a spell of the croup."

"How many savages boarded the raft?"

"Seven; and they fit like screech-owls. But come down to the fine thing of it, we had eight enemies to contend with. As I said before, the feller Mucklewee was a traitor. He had arranged the bull-trap, of course, 'cause he was t'other man's guide. But when I see'd the light from their tent, I concluded to know who they were, and sot to work thinkin' up some caper to play 'em to git inside their tent. I soon got it. I let on that I was dead, and sent Belshazzar after help to their tent. He understood a thing or two, ginerel. He's a wonderful knowin' dog, he is, for a square fact; and when I'm hurt he'll cut right out for help; or if I'll let him, he'll just pick me right up and carry me anywhere. He's stout as a lion, governor, he is for a loud fact. I rode on his back one whole day the time I got my foot hurt, and he never minded it a bit. But as I was goin' to say, I sent him to them fellers' tent, and after repeated trials, he brought them up to where I laid, all covered with blood from that cut across my head, whar a blunderin' fool grazed me with a bullet awhile before. The men kindly helped me down to their tent, and when they found I wasn't quite dead they told me so, and I recovered swiftly. I got right up and went out to wash my face and hands and slick up a little, and it was then that I discovered the difficulty the hull caboodle of us was in. If it'd 'a' bin you or me instead of that young soldier chap, we'd 'a' seen through the hull thing afore ever we planted a tent there. It's natural for us ole rats of the woods to be cautious and keep out of danger; but soldiers don't know anything about Ingins."

"What kind of a man was this soldier of whom you speak?"

"A dog-goned fine young feller with the uniform of a captain on. He belongs somewhar South, and war on his way to Laketown, and I'll bet anything he's a bearer of government dispatches to Major Van Horne, and that old Mucklewee knowed it, and wanted to git hold of his papers, to sell them to the British."

"Very likely, Harry," replied Long Beard, reflectively.

"And great hoppin' hornits! wouldn't I, though be proper glad to know how he come out of the fight. I'm afeard he went under, poor feller! But then it's some consolation to know we've all got to die. What puzzles me is how I have escaped so long. I'm a reg'lar walkin' misfortune. My first misfortune was bein' born at all, and the Lord only knows how I've had it up hill, ever since. Thar's not life enough in me to stand hard knocks. I'd give anything if I had as boomin' big anatomy as you; and hornits! don't I wish I had a fist and foot like you? They'd stand me many good turns, they would for a solid fact. A fellow wouldn't have to plant the foot on an Ingins' base, or shove the fist into his features more'n once. I've had more'n one lickin' on account of bein' a boy, and Lord only knows how many are laid up for me. Old Phineas Blume says Le

can't die happy till he wagon-whips me. Reckon you never heard of him, did you, Big Beard?"

"I think not," replied Long Beard.

"Well, he war a caution to all that's mean and stingy—why, stingy is no name for it. He was so awful, owdacious hoggish that he'd dive to the bottom of St. Clair to take a chaw tobaccor, for fear some one'd ask him for a chaw. He's been known to try to jug up sunshine to use at night to save candles, and a lot other sich mean things. But the meanest he ever done was at Deer Creek school-house, one Sunday. There was meeting there, and old Phin Blume went down. After the preacher had got through, Deacon Podge went around among the congregation, takin' subscription for the benefit of the minister. Everybody give a little sumthin', if it wasn't more'n a chaw tobaccor, but old Blume. He didn't give a mite; however, the deacon said nothin' and handed over his gatherin's to the preacher, who sorted out the different things and put 'em in his pockets, took a fresh quid of tobaccor, and then said, 'The Lord loves a cheerful giver, but despises the stingy miser.' What should old Blume do jist as soon as he got out but swear that the preacher meant him when he spoke 'bout the miser?"

"He went off home a-rantin and a-ravin', and cussin' and swearin'. He declared he'd break up the next meetin' they had there or overturn the brimstone diggin's; but nobody believed him, and so the thing dropped there. But the very next meeting at Deer Creek, Phineas Blume actually combed his hair, washed his face, and changed his moccasins, and come to meetin', and took a seat in a back corner by hisself. I see'd somethin' mean lurkin' in his eyes, and knowed he meant business. I see'd he had somethin' kivered under his wamustail, and s'posed it war his old moccasins he war goin' to donate to the preacher when the hat was passed around. Well, the preacher sung his song, prayed his prayer, and give out his text, which I'll never forgit. It war: 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

"I see'd ole Blume smile when he read this off, and give his wamustail a hitch. But the preacher went into it, and jist raked it down. Oh, hornits! how he pitched into the wicked; and I guess old Blume war the only mean sinner in the house. It made him squirm, I tell you, jist as though a fiery dart was rankling in his old heart. But all the time I kept one eye on his face, and I could see forty devils were lurkin' in that satanic smile, which he tried to make folks believe war piety. Wal, things run along smoothly for awhile, and the minister war rantin' 'bout the fiery darts of the wicked, when, all of a sudden, he clapped his hands to his nose, and uttered a word that came mighty nigh bein' a cuss word. B'sness was suspended for awhile, and everybody became clamorous to know what the matter war—everybody but ole Blume. He jist reclined there in the corner, smilin' away as calm and placid as an angel. But things soon got settled when the preacher said it wa'n't nothin' but a stray yaller jacket that had come in through the open winder and stung him on the nose. So he went into it again on the 'darts of the wicked' with renewed vigor. Things went along swimmingly for awhile, when all at once ole Mrs. Trott gave a fearful scream and begun clawin' at her hair like mad. Preachin' was suspended again, and sister Trott's ills inquired after. She said sumthin' had prodded her on the head with a sharp instrument, and while she was fuming about it, brother Sharp let slip, unthoughtedly, the plumpest little oath you mostever heard a good man use, and it come out kind o' natural, too. He said sumthin' had pricked him on the upper lip, and nigh about killed him. The next minute old uncle Jerry Finch got a thrust in the ear that bounced him clear off his seat. Then it wa'n't but a little while till Mirandy Brookover got a drive on the left cheek that made the old maid's tongue flutter like an ague chill. Next follered aunt Jane Ann Stump, an awful old termagant, who got an owdacious pop above the eye that knocked her a-flukin', heels over head off the bench. And yet no one knew from where all this deviltry came from; but when ole Blume smilingly suggested that it might be the 'fiery darts of the wicked,' I suspected something, and kept my eyes on that ole galvanized sinner—I did for a fact. And now what do you suppose I discovered, Long Beard?"

"Couldn't imagine, Harry," replied the giant, his bearded face aglow with a smile.

"I'll tell you: I discovered that that ornery ole sneak had a hornit's nest under his wamustail! I see now why he'd set down in a dark corner; it was so's that the insects would poll out for the light as soon as they got out, and wouldn't sting him. It beat me, it did, for a fact; and afore I could tell on him, things got quiet, and the preacher went on with his 'darts of the wicked.' But I kept a sly watch on ole Blume, and all at once I see'd him raise his wamustail, when out popped three big hornits, and away they darted around the room a-buzzin'. Two of them escaped at the winder, but t'other,

seein' ole Squire Fipps sinkin' into a gentle doze, descended on gauzy wing and slipped its javelin into his under lip. Lord! it made the old feller fairly 'sizz.' But things got quiet once more, and the preacher began to bring things to a close. When they all riz to sing the dockology, you'd ort to see'd 'em folks as had been stung. I had to snicker right out, and that old hulk of a Blume kept his head down, and his eyes closed, while he sung away as though he war the most innocent lamb in the flock. The preacher's nose was all swelled up, till it glistened like the top of his bald head. He had to tip-toe to see over his proboscis. Brother Sharp's upper lip had swelled till it projected like a water-shed, while the under lip of Squire Fipps pouted out like the lips of a motherless colt. Mirandy Brookover's cheek puffed out like a stuffed toad, and shoved the corner of her mouth away down to her chin. Jane Ann Stump's eye had swelled shet, but the other 'n' done business for both, but it looked lonely over at the men's side. Jerry Finch's ear was so big that it made him lop-sided, it did, for a fact. Altogether, gove'nor, it was the sorriest and most laffable sight ever see'd. And you'd ort to 'a' hearn them martyrs sing! Great hornits! they roared as if for all that was out. Mirandy Brookover swelled so long on the upward scale that she like to never got her breath again. But, Big Beard, right in the middle of that dockology, what did that p'izen ole Blume do but jerk out that whole hornit-nest and throw it over in the middle of the house! Yes, it's a burnin' fact, he did do that very thing, and you may bet nobody waited far the 'amen,' but husseled out of that house like sixty. I got one awful sting. The gosh-oned thing launched its harpoon right slap into my face, and, oh, but I swore vengeance on that demon, Blume! I war determined to be even with him, and, Big Beard, you may bet I did; and now I'll tell you how I done it—now, now, Belshazzar! Dreamin' of Ingins!"

The dog started up, with a low growl, and turned toward the door of the cabin.

Harry arose, opened the door and gazed out. A cry burst from his lips.

"Great hoppin' hornits, Big Beard! The Old Scratch is to pay!—a dozen piratical demons have boarded our schooner!"

CHAPTER VI.

LONG BEARD'S SWEEPSTAKE.

THE reply that Long Beard made to Happy Harry's startling announcement was calm and indifferent. He rose to his feet, and with the soft tread of a lion, advanced to the door of the cabin, and gazed out. True enough, he discovered a dozen forms, most of which he saw were savages, standing aft. Alongside the schooner lay their canoes.

"The shadowy imps! they must think I'm asleep. They have come to their death, or—"

"Or to ours, one'r t'other," interrupted Harry. "It jist seems as though the varmints war determined on exterminatin' me."

"You must be a thorn in their sides, Harry," the giant quietly remarked.

"A thorn? great hoppin' hornits! if I ever git through this night, I'm goin' to turn to a contagion and spread through the Ingin country, and smite the red vagrants hip and thigh. I will, for a bloody fact."

"You need have no fear of getting into trouble on this craft, Harry. Those savages meant to trap us, but they'll be trapped. There, one of them is coming this way to reconnoiter, no doubt. As soon as he finds the door is closed they'll make an attack. But the moment they start this way, I propose to sweep the deck. Now, you keep an eye on that one crawling this way."

Harry was not a little surprised at the giant's calm self-assurance, and wondered wherein he possessed the power to sweep the deck, as he declared he would. The youth kept his eyes on the advancing savage through an opening in the door. The wily red-man crept softly toward the cabin and paused at the head of the steps, and gazed at the door a moment, then turned and crept softly back to his comrades.

They held a momentary consultation, then all together started toward the cabin.

"Now look out, Harry!" cried the giant.

The boat was gliding along steadily, her sails drawn taut and full; but scarcely had the giant's words of caution fallen from his lips, ere the boat seemed to reel like a drunken man—turn almost at a right angle, and so suddenly, it came nigh upsetting. Simultaneous with this change of course, the long beam hitherto mentioned swept suddenly and violently around, like a mighty arm, and knocked every savage, heels over head, into the lake.

"Gemently hornits!" exclaimed Happy Harry, completely astonished. "Big Beard, every savage is gone a-flukin' overboard. Gracious! what's it mean?"

A low laugh escaped the giant's lips.

"It cleared the deck, did it?" he asked.

"Cleared the deck? Why, that's no name for it. That pole jist swung around like a mule's heel, and popped them over into the lake slicker'n lightnin'. Great hornits! it war worth a picayune jist to see 'em reeled off; it

war, for a sober fact; but there comes that dogged pole back. It's huntin' for more redskins, it is, sure as you're born."

"As the boat gets square with the wind, that pole takes its former position," explained Long Beard. "You see, this boat, is a contrivance of my own. By means of these ropes and pulleys that you can see here, I am enabled to steer the craft, hoist or lower sail, or by a sudden pull on this rope, change the course of the boat almost instantly; and, as it swings around, the beam sweeps around, and all that stands in its way is raked off, as you have seen."

"Hoppin' hornit! what an all-killin' contraption it is! A reglar fightin'-machine. It don't like dogs, does it, general?"

"It is no respecter of persons. It would serve friend and foe alike, if acted upon. I have used it several times in sweeping the deck of savages, and never made a bad job of it yet."

"Wal, it's a mighty convenient thing, Big Beard, it is, for a downright fact. But, dogged if it didn't knock me and Belshazzar out of a fight; but then, it's all right. We're not overly anxious for a battle—we have had enough to-night. But strikes me your gig is trotting along purty lively, general."

"Yes, we are moving along at a sharp speed now, and are going right down the coast. You see, the faster the boat is moving the quicker and stronger the arm out there sweeps the air."

"And so the stronger a queer pain strikes the Indians about the bulge of the bread-basket, causing them to bow politely and retire quickly, to be embraced in St. Clair's placid deep."

"Exactly," replied the great, white-bearded man, with a grim smile, as he led the way out upon the deck.

They glanced far back over the misty waters, but no sign of the struggling enemy could be seen; but their boats, attached to the schooner, were dragging in its frothy wake behind.

"That crew 'll never trouble us again," said the giant.

"No, no, general, they're gone. What a ghastly, ghastly world this is. But then, everybody has his notions, everybody his ways."

"Let's see," said Long Beard, reflectively; "you were jist going to tell me about how you repaid ole Blume for his hornets when the Indians boarded us. Now, as we are moving along with a good wind and fair prospect, you might kill time by narrating the story."

"It's a short story this time, govenir; but I'll tell it anyhow. It war jist this way: Blume got to be rich as Croesus. He fell heir to five hundred dollars back in New Hampshire, and then you'd ort to see that old pleb'ian come down with his style. He actually got a full suit of store clothes, washed and shaved, and went to slashin' on airs that'd 'a' beat anything in Boston town. And the first thing we knowed he got to crossin' the river to spark ole Squire Fipps's daughter, Susan, a sweet-scented gal of thirty-five, who jist puckered up her mouth to all the other gals, and wouldn't 'sociate with anybody but rich Phineas Blume. Oh, yes, Blume war everything to her; but people knowed old Tood Fipps, they did, for a scandalous fact. It war Mister Blume and Captin' Blume with her; and the reason they called him captain was because he commanded a mud-scow once on which thar wasn't but one other nigger besides hisself. But, oh, me! how old Tood did gush; and everybody knowed it wasn't his personal beauty she war after, but his fortune—his five hundred dollars. It's awful queer, Long Beard, what difference clothes made at the store and a little money will make with female woman; but then, if that's love, no gal will ever set her claws on my head; she won't, for a sacred fact. But, as I war sayin', ole Squire Fipps had ort to 'a' shot Blume when he went there, for he war one o' the congregation that got so thunderin'ly hornited that Sunday at meetin'. But the feller's style and cash done it to the old man, and all they'd say war: 'Cap Blume war a jolly dog—always playin' his pranks with somebody,' and he said that that hornit affair was the most capital joke of the season, illustratin' the text about the 'darts of the wicked' so forcible. But that's all the sense some people has got. One Sunday, however, I knowed Blume were going to see his maple-sugar, and I concluded now was my time to be even with him for that hornit job I got. I knowed he had to cross the river in the canoe used at the ferry, so down I goes to whar the craft war tied up, and right under the seat, where he couldn't see, I cut a big, round hole, and plugged it up with a plug driven in from the outside. To this plug I tied a great, long, stout string, t'other end of which I tied to a bush that hung in the water, so the string was all under the water. I hid in the bushes to wait, and d'rectly here came old Blume, whistlin', 'I won't go home till mornin', till mornin', gay as a lark, and with a kind of an upper-ten snort, jumped into the canoe, seated hisself, put on his buckskin gloves to keep his hands white, and then pulled out for t'other shore,

where his sweet-cider, old Tood Fipps, stood waitin' for him, a-wavin' of a big yaller henkerchief and shoutin' ditties to him, like an Ottawa Ingin.

"Ha! ha! ha! Long Beard, it didn't take long to run out the full length of that string, when out popped the plug and in rushed the water like all sixty. Up jumped Captain Phin Blume with a yoop, and then you'd ort to 'a' see'd him tip-toe it, flip and flirt.

"Hornits! hornits!" yelled I, runnin' down to the river bank, ready to split with laffability. "Damnation!" was all I could hear from the captain's lips, the wicked ole sinner; but the next instant he raised his wings, and out he sailed into the water, and now began the fun. The spilin' of his clothes wa'n't nowhar—it wa'n't, for a fact. He couldn't swim a lick, and of all the flounderin' and flummixin' about I ever see'd, he done it. Why, he kicked water forty feet high, and the river war all afoam. But he couldn't keep that up long; he war growin' feeblen and feeblen all the time, and I see'd he war goin' under, and so I sent Belshazzar, here, out after him. The ole pup paddled up to him, and takin' him by the collar, yanked him across the river and laid him gently at the feet of his sweet pumpkin pie. Great hoppin' hornits, but if he wasn't in a plight! It'd 'a' made a dog laff to 'a' seen him—dogged if Belshazzar didn't laugh his way when he swam over to me. I never see'd a dog tickled like he war. He'd jist wag his head sometimes, thinkin' it war his tail, he war so full of dog-laff and besides himself. But, you bet, Blume had to resume his buckskin and homespun for awhile. It ruined his store clothes, and then the best of it was that naughty ole duck of hissen went square back on him—sacked him on the spot, and called him ole Blume, and 'cused him of bein' drunk. Broken-hearted and ruined, he become desperit. He swore vengeance against me, took up his old blunderbuss, and struck boldly out in search of me. The last I hearn of him he war tryin' to climb the North Pole to look over the country for a small boy and a big dog."

Long Beard could not repress an outburst of free, hearty laughter. The look of the boy's face, the mischievous sparkle of his big, blue eyes, his whimsical expressions, and the comic gestures that accompanied them, were sufficient to have provoked any one to laughter.

At length, however, the attention of the giant borderman was attracted by a moving light off toward the west. He knew it was along the shore. He called Happy Harry's attention to it, and after defining their geographical location, asked:

"Have you ever seen anything suspicious along this part of the coast, Harry?"

"Haven't, Big Beard; in fact, I haven't been this fur south along the lake for over a year; I haven't, for a historical fact. But I've been easin' myself down this way for several days. But, Big Beard, if that is anything you'd like to look into, Belshazzar and me can figger it out to a demonstration; we can, for a gospel fact. But there, the light's gone."

"Yes, I see it is; nevertheless, I believe I will put ashore and reconnoiter a little along there. I'll touch the coast a mile below where the light disappeared."

Descending to the cabin, the giant at once changed the course of the boat toward the shore, and in less than an hour they had effected a safe landing. They now turned their faces northward, and, preceded by Belshazzar, followed along the coast for some distance. Further progress was finally disputed by a long, narrow bay cutting out abruptly into the woods. This bay was skirted by a wall of rock rising almost perpendicular from the water's edge, and ranging from five to a hundred feet in height. Its facade was covered with small bushes that grew out of holes and fissures, and a festoonery of vines that trailed their graceful length in the water.

The moon was now in the zenith. The dull, hazy mist that hung over lake and woodland at the beginning of night had disappeared. The two scouts were enabled to see all the northern side of the bay quite distinctly, and while they stood regarding the rocky shore now rendered grandly picturesque in the mellow moonlight, they made a discovery that caused them no little curiosity. Midway between the lake and the other extremity of the bay was a narrow rift or passage in the rocky wall sloping down to the water's edge, and a little to the right of this passage was moored a canoe, half of whose length was concealed under the overhanging vines.

Long Beard turned to Harry and said: "This is about the point where we saw that light."

"Yes, I believe it is, govenir," replied the youth, "and I should not wonder if the man or men that owns that canoe knows all about the light."

"I propose to know something more about the matter, Harry. I am going to pass around to the other side and approach that canoe by way of that rift you can see near it; then I will explore the immediate vicinity for some clew to that light. I shouldn't wonder at all if

there was a cavern leading back into that hill; and if so, rest assured it is used for no good purpose. If I find nothing, or no one, I will charter the canoe and cut straight across to you. But, while I am gone, Harry, I want you to stand right here and keep a close watch—see if any one boards that canoe while I am going around. If such a thing should happen, don't fire, even if the occupant is a savage, but watch him closely and make out all you can concerning him."

"If it's an Ingin, govenir, I'd like to make him out a pass for the brimstone diggin's, I would, for a veritable fact."

"Do not raise an alarm, Harry, unless it is absolutely necessary. And I will tell you why I am so anxious to find out the meaning of that light: you, of course, have heard that a band of lake pirates have been operating along the coast in both the United States and Canada. Their head-quarters have defied the vigilance of the shrewdest detectives, and now a heavy reward is offered by the country for information that will lead to the capture of the freebooters. I have no desire to obtain that reward, but I am anxious to have the band broken up; and I'll tell you why: for the past week, off and on, a strange, piratical-looking little sail-boat has been dogging me about over the lake in a rather suspicious manner. It has also been seen off the Islands, and I have fears for the safety of my friends there. Should they find out what treasures I have there my home would be desolated. Now you know, Harry, why I am so interested in this movement."

"Yes, yes, general," replied the youth, "and when one knows what he wants he can go ahead with half the trouble, he can for a square fact. Go ahead, Big Beard, and I'll keep a close watch on that boat from here."

The giant turned and moved away with noiseless footsteps, while Happy Harry sat down under the wide, branching boughs of an oak to await and watch. Belshazzar took his usual position at the feet of his young master. Alone, and with the strictest silence imposed upon him, Harry very naturally fell into a train of reflections, from which he started at length, exclaiming half indignantly to himself:

"Blast it, it's a nuisance to have to be a boy, for thar never war a boy but what war under-rated. Everybody thinks he can do anything better than I can, and it's jist because I'm a boy. Now, why didn't he let me and Bell go round thar? But then Long Beard is a capital feller. And, gracious hornits, how sober! A smile on his face is like a burst of sunshine through a black, dismal cloud. But I'm afraid he'll git himself into trouble jist because he didn't let me and Bell go round thar."

Thus he passed some ten or fifteen minutes when he plainly saw Long Beard emerge from the narrow defile and pause at the water's edge.

For full a minute the giant stood and scrutinized the surrounding rocks and bay. He listened intently. He saw and he heard nothing, and feeling satisfied that no enemy was near, he stepped into the canoe that lay at his feet, and, seating himself, took up the paddle. But scarcely had he done so when Harry, who was watching on the opposite side of the bay, saw a light under the bank flash through the vines that partially concealed the prow of the boat, and the next instant the canoe, with Long Beard in it was drawn suddenly under the bank, and disappeared entirely from view.

"Oh, great hornits! he's caught, he is, by heavens!" cried Happy Harry, starting to his feet as the stunning clash of a pistol, mingled with a cry of agony and the sound of a deadly struggle, rolled out in clearly-heard intonations from the depths of the great cavern!

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE FREEBOOTERS' DEN.

IN making the circuit of the bay, Long Beard had seen no signs of the presence of enemies, nor was he aware of the presence of danger until he had seated himself in the canoe. The flash of a light, and the suddenness with which the boat was drawn through the screen of vines and foliage, were the very first intimations he had of the trap he was in. He was thrown almost from the seat by the violent start of the craft, but recovering himself he endeavored to escape; but his enemies, seeing the intention, gave the canoe a sudden jerk that again threw him off his balance.

The boat was dragged and pushed through shallow backwater along a narrow cavern until it reached dry ground.

Here again Long Beard essayed to effect his escape. He had drawn one of his pistols, which he fired at a cloaked figure rushing upon him with a lantern in one hand and an upraised club in the other. The foe whirled half round and staggering, fell with a groan; but the next moment a dozen men surrounded the bearded giant and demanded his surrender.

One voice directed the movements of the men and sent a shudder to the heart of the borderman, yet it steeled his nerves, and he fought with the desperation of a madman. His face grew livid with the terrible emotion surging

within him; his teeth became set, his eyes glared with a deadly fire; the cords stood out upon his brow and neck, and his breast rose and fell as though by the palpitations of an internal volcano.

The foe closed in around him. He clinched his huge fist and beat them down. They rallied and renewed the attack, rendered furious by his terrible blows. The sound of the struggle brought others to the scene of conflict.

A dozen were now upon him, but he fought them all. His strength seemed superhuman. His majestic form towered grandly above his adversaries. In the dim wavering light of two lanterns, his venerable beard rendered him an object that should have appealed to the wickedest heart.

To and fro across the cavern the combatants surged. The giant kept a space clear around him for awhile, but his enemies, growing more desperate under his smarting blows, crowded closer upon him; they finally made a charge—grappling him around the waist, by the arms, by the legs, until he was completely loaded down and unable to move. Then a cowardly wretch seized him by his white beard and jerked him to the ground. This ended the struggle. Before he could regain his feet the united strength of a dozen men was concentrated upon him and made him a prisoner. He was then securely bound, and conducted through the narrow windings of the cavern into a commodious apartment. Here he was seated upon a stone chair that had been hewn out of a stalagmite.

The prisoner now had an opportunity to look around him. The room was lighted with three or four lanterns suspended from the jagged ceiling. The place bore strong evidence of having been occupied by man for a number of years. This satisfied the captive that he was in the den of the lake pirates.

Not less than forty or fifty men were pressing to and fro across the cavern before and around the prisoner. All of them were heavily armed, and the most singular thing of all was, their weapons were of English patterns and of recent manufacture.

The giant studied considerably over this matter. It gave rise to a sudden thought—if these men into whose power he had fallen were the lake pirates, they had been armed and equipped by, and were in the employ of the British Government. Taking into consideration the rumors of war with England, he thought it possible and altogether probable that he was right and that the party had been placed there to accomplish some particular work of destruction the moment the order was given.

There was a military bearing about all the men, and but for the absence of uniforms, he would have sworn it was a party of royal troops. Some of them wore breeches of buckskin, made after the style of the border; others wore them made of woolen and cotton material.

The leader of the band—he whose voice had sent a shudder to Long Beard's soul—was a man of nearly fifty years. He had a fine martial figure and features regular in contour, but not handsome. A heavy grizzled beard covered a face marked with a life of dissipation. His eyes were of a dark-gray color, sharp and keen, but cold and cruel. Sternness of character was written upon every feature of the man's face. He was dressed in a citizen's suit, but wore a sword at his side. His movements were as easy, his step as elastic as those of a youth of twenty. Time had made little inroad upon the physical man.

Long Beard knew the man, and feared him. Of all others in the wide world, he was the last person the giant borderman expected to meet. But, concealing his inward emotions, he appeared not to know him.

"You are doubtless surprised, big stranger, at the existence of such a place, or else you would have been more careful in your reconnaissance," this enemy finally said, approaching Long Beard. But, singular as it may seem, this man did not recognize the giant, else he was a so affecting ignorance of the recognition.

"No one knows when he will step into an ant-hill," was Long Beard's response, spoken in a tone of bitter sarcasm.

"Nor of the stings of the ants," replied the commandant.

"You threaten me; well, you can afford to do so, now that I am powerless."

"Yes, you are powerless as a spy."

"Upon whom?"

"Know you not that our country has made war on England?" the man asked, with a furtive glance at the prisoner.

"You mean to say your country has made war upon mine," was Long Beard's answer.

"We are not British subjects."

"Nor American."

"No; we are Neutrals."

"Ready to pick up the spoils of war."

"As you please."

"I am no partisan. I am silent."

"Why, then, were you here?"

"Following the bent of my inclination."

"Which has got you into trouble?"
 "Why has it if you are Neutrals, and not outlaws?"

"We have a right to the benefit of our doubts, and will be compelled to hold you in custody until we have some assurance of your purpose in coming here."

"Till you find out my home, inhuman wretch," thought Long Beard, as a look of bitter anguish swept over his face. He made no reply to the man's words, but became silent.

The commandant turned and walked away to where a man was seated upon a couch of dry leaves, his head swathed in a bandage, his face bruised and swollen.

"It is he, Bill, by heavens!" the commandant said in an undertone.

"I thought it was," mumbled the man of the bandage and swollen face.

Long Beard overheard the remark, and though he sickened with terror, the power of a lion gathered within him. His breast swelled and his eyes glowed.

Evil designs were evident in the very tones and movements of the man, Kirby Kale, as he was addressed by his companions, and the giant felt satisfied that he was recognized. Knowing the man of old, no wonder he feared him.

Outwardly, however, Long Beard yielded submissively to his fate. He regarded Captain Kirby Kale with the greatest indifference. Few living persons had the least idea of the relationship, of the deadly hatred, of the dark secrets existing between these two men. Years of separation had failed to eradicate one tithe of this awful bitterness—so terrible that each one was afraid to declare his recognition of the other, although one was captor and the other captive. Bitter and strange indeed must have been the antagonism between these two men.

In the course of an hour Captain Kirby Kale came around, and in a tone of feigned indifference, said:

"Gray Beard, I have talked with my men, and all suggest that you be kept a captive until we are assured of your real character and of your place of residence."

"What is that to you, if you are Neutrals, as you claim?" asked Long Beard.

"We are partial to our own safety."

"Then you fear a single man?"

"Only his tongue."

"You have reason for fear, then. Your conscience must be guilty."

"One word might bring a regiment of Americans down upon us."

"Then you favor the English?"

Captain Kale betrayed a slight emotion. He had incautiously said more than he had intended.

"I tell you, sir, I am neutral," he affirmed, severely.

"And I, too," replied Long Beard, indifferently.

"We'll see," and the captain turned and walked away. He was soon at the further extremity of the cavern, in a whispered conversation with a few of his men.

Leaning his head against the wall behind him, the prisoner gave himself up to reflection. A deep silence now fell upon the place. Most of the men had sought their couches. The lanterns burned steadily and brightly, but their light failed to reach the extremities of the cavern. Where the light ended and darkness began was a wall of purple gloom.

The cavern was a natural one, hollowed out by the hand of the Creator. Stalactites, tipped with the silver light of the lanterns, studded the black dome overhead like stars, and huge stalagmites rose up here and there, grim and ghostly. The prisoner noted everything closely, for he had resolved to make an attempt at escape when the proper time came, and he wanted to familiarize himself with the place and get the right course leading out.

The night stole on. The captain had retired, and one by one the others dropped off, leaving the prisoner and his guards alone. The lights began to burn dimly. Only the heavy respirations of the sleepers, or an occasional question drawn out by one of the guards, broke the silence of the place, when, suddenly, a deep, startling sound came crashing through the cavern from the main entrance. It started the guards and aroused the sleepers!

It was the deep bay of a dog, and the old borderman's mind at once reverted to Happy Harry and his faithful companion, Belshazzar. A feeling of hope took possession of his breast, but as he saw the men hurrying from their couches all vanished again. What meant the noise? Was Happy Harry coming to his assistance? Had the youth seen him drawn into the trap of the enemy?

The bay of the animal again echoed through the hollow chambers of the great vault.

"This way, this way, some of you!" called out the man who stood guard near the entrance of the passage.

Three or four men, one of them carrying a lantern, hastened down to the water's edge.

"What is it, Hoover?"

"Look and tell me yourself, if you can," answered the guard.

The man held his lantern high above his head. The light streamed out upon the water. He saw that the water was agitated—little waves were chafing the walls of the cavern. Something dark was in the water—something possessed of life—struggling slowly and laboriously toward them.

"Well, what is it, anyhow?"

All stood speechless with wonderment. No one could answer, for no one knew. All saw a black mass struggling in the channel, but the faint gleam of the lantern's light was not strong enough to reveal its outlines.

"It's a bear!" one of the men finally ventured to assert.

The whole party recoiled with an involuntary start.

The object came nearer and assumed a more tangible form.

"By heavens, it's a big dog!" exclaimed the man with the lantern.

"It is, for a fact," affirmed the others.

"But what's he got in his mouth? What's that he's draggin' this way through the water?"

"Merciful Moses! it's a person!—a human—dead!—drowned!"

The man saw aright. The black object was a dog—it was Belshazzar. And he was dragging a human body through the shallow water toward them! It was the body of his young master, Happy Harry!

With bated breath, and wonder written upon every feature, the Neutrals watched the animal. He dragged the body along, making desperate efforts to keep it out of the water. He soon came within reach of where the men stood, then one of them stooped down and pulled the body ashore.

"Hold the lantern here, Victor."

Victor held the lantern close to the face of the dead.

"I declare, it's a boy, and he's dead as a door-nail."

Harry's eyes were closed, his teeth set, his hair wet and draggled. A death-like pallor was upon his young, boyish face. In one hand was clasped, in a vise-like grip, a broken bough. One of the men attempted to remove it, but failed.

"It's fast," he said, "in the icy grip of death. And that's what's killed the little feller. He's been climbing along the rocks, and that bough has broke and let him fall."

Belshazzar came out of the water, shook the wet from his shaggy form, then advanced to the side of his young master and gazed down into his face with an almost human intelligence. Then he seated himself upon his haunches, and looking back into the black, dismal cavern, howled at the black, sullen waves.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRY ON HIS WITS.

"He must have been a friend of that big White Beard," said one of the men, as they stood mutely around the motionless form of the boy.

And this was the conclusion that they all came to.

"Is he dead?" asked Captain Kale, coming up at this juncture.

"Deader'n the Prophets."

Kale stooped and felt his pulse.

"He is not dead," he exclaimed; "he has a strong pulse. Carry him up to the room and we'll pump the water out of him and give him a strong stimulant."

Two men stooped to lift the youth in their arms, when the dog disputed their right to the body; but, after some coaxing, they succeeded in convincing the animal of their friendly intentions, and were permitted to move the body, though the faithful mastiff followed close behind the two men.

They placed the youth on a couch, not far from where Long Beard sat in bonds.

"Do you know him?" Captain Kale asked, pointing to the youth.

Long Beard shook his head involuntarily. His great heart grew sick when he recognized the face of the motionless form. The broken branch still clutched in his hand told him that the boy had doubtless met his fate in trying to assist him.

Belshazzar crept up and crouched down by his master's side, and watched the administrations of the men with an eager, anxious look.

The captain ordered some brandy, which being furnished was poured quite freely down the youth. Then three or four men set to work chafing his limbs to assist in starting the circulation. Thus for some minutes they worked faithfully to bring back the failing spark, but with no apparent success.

"I'm afraid he's too far gone to be saved," said the captain, hopelessly.

Long Beard heard the words. They fell like a death-knell upon his ears.

Tiring of their efforts, the men finally wrapped the body in a blanket and left it. They manifested little anxiety about his recovery.

The man with the bandage on his head finally came yawning from his couch and looked at the dead boy. He spurned the body with

his foot and moved on, muttering profanely to himself.

Long Beard kept his eyes upon the boy's face. Some invisible power bade him watch; and, to his joyful delight, as well as surprise, he saw Happy Harry open his eyes and flash a wry face at the retreating form of the man of the bandage. Then he glanced toward him, winked significantly, closed his eyes, and to all appearances was dead again.

In an instant all flashed through the mind of the captive—Happy Harry was feigning unconsciousness! By the help of his trained and powerful dog, the daring boy had deceived the enemy and gained admittance to their stronghold. He played his part well. He was a skillful actor, with courage and recklessness enough to carry out any cunning design.

For some time our hero lay perfectly motionless upon the ground. His dog crouched by his side. Now and then a man walked past him, regarding him only with a passing glance.

Again the men sought their couches, and silence once more pervaded the cavern. Some of the lights burned out, leaving a dusky twilight. Suddenly the figure of Happy Harry stirred. It rolled over—rolled toward Long Beard. It rolled over once, then stopped. After a few minutes' pause it rolled over again. This was repeated until the prisoner was reached, unobserved. In a moment it rolled back to its former position.

Then a groan escaped the boy's lips.

The guards started up and glanced toward him. Long Beard apparently was sound asleep.

"By St. Peter! that boy must be comin' to," said one of the men.

"The little sprig was about played out," responded the other.

"Such a tender infant shouldn't be turned loose so early, in this unhealthy latitude."

"He must be that Big Beard's boy."

A cry of surprise and an oath was the reply.

The man had looked up from his cards just in time to see Long Beard rise from his seat and dash away toward the entrance of the cavern. No bonds hampered his movements.

They lay upon the cavern floor, where he had sat.

The whole band was aroused, and in a moment all were hurrying through the cavern. Captain Kirby Kale brought up the rear. Curses fell from his lips and rage darkened his brow.

"Take it easy, gov'nir; it's the best way; it is, by a sacred fact," said a pleasant voice near him.

Kale turned, and to his surprise saw Happy Harry reclining on his elbow on the ground. A mischievous, comic smile—the natural expression of the boy's countenance—was upon his face. He manifested no alarm nor curiosity concerning his whereabouts, but seemed perfectly indifferent to his situation.

And so skillfully, boldly and shrewdly had he played his part in liberating Long Beard, that the captain mistrusted nothing of the truth. He turned short upon the boy, and in a tone expressing his surprise, exclaimed:

"Why, lad, I thought you were dead!"

"Dead?" reiterated Harry; "well, s'pose I had been; a dead nigger couldn't rest in this place for the confounded noise. What ails them tatterdemallions rushin' down there like mad? Where am I, gov'nir?"

"Do you remember where you were last?" asked Kale.

"I've a faint sprinklin' of an idea," replied the youth, scratching his head reflectively.

"I think I was scramblin' long a ledge overlookin' a bay of Lake St. Clair, tryin' to git to a hawk's nest, when my foot slipped and I careened handsomely over into the water. And about this time—while I war fallin' and while mussin' around in the water—I tried to think of so many things at once that my brain couldn't hold 'em, and so I didn't think of anything. As to where I am, I can't say whether I'm on earth, or in the regions of darkness presided over by Satan. Strikes me them fellers rushin' down thar are a legion of imps the way they beller. And—" he sniffed the air like a hound—"strikes me I smell brimstone."

Kirby Kale indulged in an outburst of laughter.

"Who are you, boy?" he asked.

"I used to be called Happy Harry, the Wild Boy, when I lived on earth, and made a b'ness of huntin' squirrels and robbin' birds' nests. I s'pose this is the hunter's corner of perdition, eh?"

At this juncture a man came up with the information that Long Beard had escaped.

Kale swore with impotent rage, and even threatened the guards with violence.

Happy Harry suddenly caught a glimpse of the man with the bandage on his head. It was the traitor, Bill Mucklewee—he who had betrayed Captain Rankin into the hands of the savages. But the villain kept aloof from him as if to keep his identity concealed.

Daylight finally came outside, but darkness remained in the cavern. The lanterns had to be kept burning both night and day. Food already prepared was served out to the band. Harry partook heartily and made himself at

home among the strangers and enemies. In a short time all the men with the exception of Mucklewee became greatly attached to the young waif and his huge canine friend. His flushed, joyous face and sparkling eyes, and his rollicking spirit, broke like a flood of sunlight into their dark retreat and its dismal, monotonous life.

Captain Kale questioned Harry closely about the rumored war with England, Long Beard, and many other things, all of which the youth evaded in such a careful manner that he left the captain no wiser, and without having his suspicions aroused.

Harry and his dog were given the liberty of the cavern. The youth could have escaped, but he was not ready yet. He was anxious to know what the band was doing there. He could not believe they were the lake pirates of whom Long Beard had spoken, and yet he was fully convinced that it was a party whose movements were made under cover of night, as it were. And of this he satisfied himself fully. During the day he sauntered about the cavern, looking boldly into the niches and corners of the place with a listless, boyish curiosity not calculated to provoke mistrust. To his surprise he caught the glimpse of several suits of clothing laid away in one place and another which he recognized as the uniforms of British infantry. This discovery left no doubt in his mind as to who and what the band was—a company of His Majesty's troops that had stolen across the line from Canada and ambushed themselves in the cavern. But, what their object could have been in so doing, and in concealing their military insignia beneath the garb of civilians, was beyond our hero's comprehension. But he mentally resolved to know, now that he was in their midst.

The following night found the young spy still in the camp of the enemy, and as they all gathered in the great subterranean chamber after supper, Kale turned to him and said:

"Harry, can't you sing us a song to pass the hours?"

"I never could sing, govenir, for shucks; for all I love music. But, boys, I'll tell you: Belshazzar can sing better than I can. He can sing like a lark, he can, for a joyous fact. He's got a good voice for music, boys, strange as it may seem, and I'll bet any man here that he can sing a thundering good lick for a big dog."

"I'll take that bet," said one of the men, "and I'll put up my rifle against the old dog."

"It's a whack, by the holy pokers!" exclaimed Harry. "It's not often I bet, but when a man comes up that way and names the terms, I can't crawfish. Yes, stranger, it's rifle against dog."

A dim twilight pervaded the cavern, and the faces of the men could be but indistinctly seen. Some of them were sitting, others lying about in attitudes of ease and repose. Harry himself sat leaning against a huge stalagmite on the shadowy side. His dog lay curled up, a rod or two away.

"You have all heard the bet, have you, boys?" asked the lad's opponent, who felt certain of some fun at Harry's expense.

"Yes, yes," responded his companions.

"I've been wantin' a good gun some time," said Harry.

"And I've been wanting a good dog-skin," answered the man, and his companions laughed at his remark.

"To-whit-to-who!" suddenly rung through the cavern. It was the startling cry of an owl. It was so distinct and harsh in its intonations that the men held their breath and listened—many looking completely frightened.

A moment's silence ensued. The men listened intently for the repetition of the sound.

Belshazzar rose upon his haunches and barked, his deep bass voice sounding through the chambers of the cavern like the boom of a musket.

Then a strange sound floated through the place; it was the sound of far-off music—of some one singing a plaintive song.

The men looked from one to the other in blank astonishment.

The music grew louder, came nearer. Occasionally the listeners could distinguish a word or two.

"By heavens, it's the dog! You have lost, Talbot," said Kirby Kale.

The sound seemed to issue from the very lips of the dog, true enough. Every one would have sworn that it did.

The singing lasted for full two minutes, then it ceased and the dog lay down.

"I'll take the rifle," said the boy.

Talbot could make no reply. He was speechless, and so were his friends. But soon all recovered. They saw through the mystery—Harry was a ventriloquist!

"Ha! ha!" laughed Captain Kale; "well done, my lad; well done!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" responded his men.

CHAPTER IX.

HARRY'S BLACK SWAMP YARN.

HAPPY HARRY was a wonderful mimic, as well as ventriloquist, and he spent several hours with the band, illustrating his powers.

He did so more to gain their confidence than for any other purpose. The more he amused and entertained them the less reserved they became toward him. Fully satisfied that Long Beard was safe, he resolved to be in no particular hurry about getting away, at least, not until he had found the object of Kirby Kale in lying in concealment there.

The youth could imitate the cry of any bird or animal. He started his auditors more than once with the buzzing of bees and the hissing of serpents. He seemed to have been endowed with an especial gift from nature, which his wildwood associations and daily practice had fully developed.

"You are possessed of a wonderful gift, Harry," said Kale. "I have seen persons before now who could imitate birds and beasts and throw their voices away in different directions, but have seen none to be compared with you."

"That's good praise, captain," replied Harry: "I know I've a fine thing out of it, but I never boast of what I can do. I find it real handy to be able to mock things and to plant my voice around here and there. It's helped me out of more'n one difficulty, it has, for a fact. And then, I made a big thing of it once, and I'll tell you how it was. You've heard of Red Satan, the Swamp Thief, I reckon? Well, at any rate, he war the most owdacious cut-throat that walked the foot-stool, them days. He infested the big Black Swamp 'bout a hundred and fifty miles below here, and made a business of stealin' little children and big girls, and hidin' 'em in the swamp and holdin' 'em for ransom. Great, hoppin' hornits, but he was a sly one—wusser than an Italian brigand. All the powers on earth couldn't capture him. The settlers finally got some blood-hounds and tried to hunt him down, but one day they found them dead on the outlaw's trail. They tried to trap him in every way possible. They searched the swamps through and through, from Maumee to Sandusky. They hunted the woods over and over, but they couldn't find Red Satan. I allers believed, boys, that he had lots of friends among his many enemies, else he couldn't have got away so slick every time."

"Finally, people got tired of payin' him ransoms, although he war always honest enough to give up the child or gal, all right, soon as the cash war deposited in a certain place. But he kept on with his devilry till first thing we knowed, two children and a young girl war missin' from the settlement, and notice found demandin' ever so much ransom for their safe return. Of course, all knowed that Red Satan war at the bottom of it, though there was no name to the notice. People, however, concluded to pay the reward, for him instead of the children, and so a big thing war offered to the man or men that would take the swamp-devil alive. In course they wanted him taken alive and then they could make him tell where the children were concealed; but if he war killed outright they might never find them. Wal, I wasn't a man, but I concluded to take a hand in the hunt, and so struck out for the big swamp. For two weeks I waded and plunged and crashed through the awful wilderness, like a mad alligator, and what should I do but find the den of the old tiger, Red Satan. It war in a part of the swamp where the settlers declared no human bein' could penetrate, let alone live. But I found that the old Satan, was not alone—that he had a partner, and that partner war none other than Arlow Vardocq, an Indian trader, who was well respected at the settlement."

"Red Satan war big enough to eat me teta-tally up, and when I bolted right into his den onto him, I thought I'd follered my last trail. He jist got up and caterpillared. Holy pokers, how he champed his bits and cavorted! He and his pard jist almost snatched me bald-headed, they did, for a painful fact. They bound me and chucked me off into the loft, clucklin' over the idea of another child for ransom. But, great hoppin' hornits! they didn't know thar wasn't a soul in the north that'd pay a dollar for the Wild Boy, as old fellers said would come to some bad 'eend.' But up in the loft, whar they confined me, war the two missin' children and the young woman belongin' to the settlement. In course, Belshazzar was with me, but they didn't chuck him off for a ransom. They jist went sweet on him and concluded to adopt him, and keep him at the cabin. I war glad of this, for I war mortal afraid they'd kill him."

"Well, they kept me in that place nearly a week and almost starved the daylight out of my body. Them little children and the big gal fared lots better because they wasn't boys; but they took on awfully. I told 'em to take it easy as possible and nebbly all'd burn out right yet. But it run along about eight days before Red Satan and his conspirator, Vardocq, left the cabin. When I war sure they war gone, I called to Belshazzar, whom they'd left locked in the room below. The old hero answered with a bark, and, after several attempts, he succeeded in springin' up into the loft, which wasn't over five feet high. I made him chaw

my bonds off in a jiffy, then I set the other three captives free. So far things'd worked charmingly but now come the tug; the three captives were so weak they couldn't hardly stand up, and I didn't know what to do with them; but do somethin' I must. I couldn't get them out of the swamp before danger was likely to come upon us, so what was I to do? At last I concluded to hide 'em and play shenanigan on ole Satan and his imp. So I hid 'em in his bed—a big pile of reeds and swamp-grass covered with blankets in a dark corner. You see, I removed some of the 'feathers' and substituted the captives' bodies, so's the bed wasn't no bigger. This done, I deliberately set down and waited till ole Satan and his left-bower come home. Great hoppin' hornits! then you'd ort to see that brimstone-pitian howl and swear. He frothed and foamed and blubbered. He asked me what I was doin' there, and where the others war. I told him that the big gal had got loose and had freed the rest of us, and had fled with the two little children. He actually got mad and cussed me for not goin' too. I told him my scruples of honesty forbid my desertin' him. I told him I kind o' wanted to stay with him and adopt him as my father, for I was a poor lone orphan. I sobbed and snuffled and slobbered a little to give my words an air of truth. The tears jist boiled out of my eyes to show how I was affected, but I come dog-gone near over-doin' the thing and gittin' too much tobacco-dust in my eyes. But, blessed if ole Satan and his tulip didn't melt to'rds me. My tears brought them; it did, for a tender fact."

"Then father Satan wanted to know, 'you little idiot, how long's them other brats been gone?' I told the gentle ole tiger that they'd jist left, and the way they'd gone, and that I'd help him hunt them, and away we went lickety-to-brindle out into the swamp. We hunted and hunted for their trail, but somehow or other we couldn't find it. Ole Satan jist swore a blue streak; he did, for a hard fact. But, all at once, we heard a cry off before us; it was the cry of a child—a sad, pitiful cry."

"Thar they are," roared the gentle-lunged Satan, and great hornits! how he went a-smashin' through them reeds! I tell ye, it sounded as though a hurricane was sweepin' through the swamp. Ole Satan fell down once, and nighly busted hisself; but he jumped up, give hisself a spiteful jerk, and launched away again. I follered close behind—me and Bell. Vardocq puffed on half a mile behind. But, somehow or other we couldn't overtake them fugitives to save us. Finally ole Satan stopped to listen, and blest if we didn't hear that child's cry again off some distance to the left. With a snort the swamp angel plunged away in that direction; me and Belshazzar followed, ready to burst with laughter. Great hornits! how ole Sate did smack his big feet on the earth, and sweat and swear!—whew! it was awful to hear the old galvanized monster. Every time he stopped to listen he could hear that child's cry, and so he kept on and on for more'n five miles. At length we came to the edge of a sloo, and had to cross an opening of several rods before reaching the timber beyond. A creek separated the swamps and woods also. On the edge of the marsh old Purgatory stopped and listened, and dogged if we didn't hear it cry over in the timber. Away waltzed the father of sin. He come to the creek and made a leap, but his foot slipped and he fell plump into the water. Great Jehovah, boys! I couldn't help it—I luffed right out! But ole Brimstone didn't know it war me that luffed—I guess he thought it war the big gal that had seen him tumble in the water. The old Nick scrambled out the crick, cussin' till the trees around him trembled. He rushed into the woods like mad, and what do you s'pose greeted his satanic ears?"

"Another child-cry," replied Captain Kale.

"Nary cry. It war, 'stand, villain!' and a dozen men with leveled rifles emerged from the thick undergrowth and surrounded him. Not until that moment did the deluded Satan suspect me of having led him into a trap. He turned and looked toward me, and I tell you that look was ole salter. I'll never forgit it—never. He drew his knife and made one sweep to'rds me, but he was so furious that he over-reached hisself and fell—fell onto his own knife, which let the daylight out of him. By this Vardocq put in an appearance and was nabbed. Then I led the men back to the cabin and got the captives. Poor things! they war nighly gone when we rescued them. But you see, boys, my gift done the world some good that time, for I was the child that done the cryin' through the swamp."

"Well, that was quite an adventure for a boy," said Kirby Kale.

"It was, for a genuine fact, captain; but I've been in lots worse scrapes than that."

Thus, for some time, Happy Harry amused the band, with thrilling stories of his own adventures, but finally, growing tired, he rolled himself in a blanket and went to sleep, most of the men following his example.

Before retiring, Captain Kale turned to three of his men who were preparing to leave the cave, and said:

"Have everything in readiness, boys, and if the messenger from General Brock does not arrive by midnight, we will embark for the Seven Islands."

Happy Harry heard the order, for all he was apparently asleep.

And long before midnight came, the Wild Boy was missing. Search was at once made through the cavern, but neither boy nor dog could be found; both had made their escape!

CHAPTER X.

HARRY AT HIS OLD TRICKS.

HAPPY HARRY had made his escape from the cavern a few minutes after the last man had retired to his couch. He saw that he had effectually thrown the band off its guard—that it exercised no watch over him, and possessed of sufficient information to establish the true character of the men, he concluded now was the time to escape. This he effected by swimming out of the mouth of the cavern and across to the opposite side of the bay. Here he secured his weapons, which he had concealed before venturing into the cavern, and beat a hasty retreat northward along the bay. He pushed rapidly on until assured that the distance between him and the cavern placed him beyond danger, when he came to a halt.

Being somewhat tired and worn, he sought a good place for rest, and lying down soon fell asleep. He slept soundly till morning. He did not wake till the sun was up. Then he arose to a sitting posture and rubbed his eyes. A bird sung in the tree-top above. He imitated its song. It chirped as if calling to a mate; Harry answered, and the bird came nearer.

Thus for some time he amused himself imitating the cry and song of birds, and his answers were to the ears of the feathered songsters what the eyes of the serpent are. It seemed magnetic—to draw them toward him. There seemed to be a fascination in his voice that they could not resist, for they gathered around in evidence of the fact. They alighted in the tree-top overhead, and in the bushes. They sung and twittered, and flew from bough to bough, peeping down at him with their diamond-bright eyes. They appeared as if desirous of approaching nearer, and yet afraid.

A pair of meek-eyed doves sat on a limb nearest the youth. A blue-jay took a position on the tip of a swaying bush. A frisky little robin swayed among the verdant foliage. A pheasant drummed on a log. A sly old woodpecker peered over a dead limb on which he occasionally rattled his beak. A speckled tom-tit danced awkwardly around a tree-trunk, and a flock of blackbirds, with red and gold upon their wings, chattered above all. In answer to Harry's call a squirrel frisked out of a hole in a tree hard by, curled its tail upon its back, reared upon its hind feet, and regarded the surroundings with a critical eye.

And lying upon his back, Harry gazed upon all with an eye of admiration. He was supremely happy. He felt that his society was courted by these innocent inhabitants of the wildwood. He loved them, and the greatest joy of his life was to be surrounded by them. When he was lonesome—when a vague feeling of unrest took possession of him—he called the birds. They would always come at his call, and their presence filled the unknown void in his young heart. They seemed to have, of him, none of that instinctive fear which causes the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to shrink from the presence of man. There appeared to be a mutual and sympathetic concord of love between Harry and the birds. There must have been some visible resemblance in their instinct and existence. It is true, Harry possessed a human heart susceptible of the tenderest emotions, a mind capable of thought and reason of unusual intelligence. And yet, he had been brought up in the woods, as it were, from infancy. The birds had been his daily and most constant companions, and he naturally partook of their nature. He never killed a bird, nor did he slay an animal unless absolutely necessary for the maintenance of life. He had learned to regard them as fellow-beings. But Harry knew his enemies, both human and beast. This knowledge in most cases, was instinctive. He often met strangers whom he felt at a glance were enemies, and he was seldom wrong. His education combined both human reason and animal instinct. The latter often led him into doing things without the will's volition.

He knew the language of the birds and animals to some extent, for the birds and animals do have a language. He knew by its cry whether a bird sought its mate or not. He knew by its song whether it was one of sadness or joy. He knew by its movements whether danger was near; and all this he had learned by association with them, just as we learn the ways and habits of others by mingling in their society.

For fully an hour the youth lay upon the earth, mimicking the different songsters and chattering with the squirrel, all the while his boyish face radiant with delight. The doves nodded their heads to him and cooed softly; the blackbirds chattered gayly and flashed and

flapped their wings of scarlet and yellow in the bright morning sun; the pheasant ruffled her feathers, shook the dew from her wings and arranged her morning toilet with all the vanity of a fastidious belle. The red head of the comic old woodpecker was thrust shyly above or under the dead limb, now and then, like a bashful boy peering around a corner; the squirrel frisked in an out of its home, up and down the tree, and sprung from bough to bough, as though conscious of Master Harry's admiration.

Suddenly, however, the doves craned their necks and flew rapidly away. The blackbirds rose in the air and circled from sight. The woodpecker dropped from his perch as if shot, flapped his wings and staggered off through the air as no other bird ever flies. The squirrel darted into his hole, and Harry was alone. He rose quickly to his feet. Belshazzar sniffed the air. The clatter of hoofs broke upon the silence. A man on horseback emerged from the woods and drew rein within twenty feet of our hero. In one hand he held a cocked pistol, which he leveled at Harry's head and called out:

"Surrender, or I'll blow your head off!"

The man wore a military cloak and a military air. Under the one was the uniform of a British officer, under the other a murderous intent.

"Great hoppin' hornits, stranger!" exclaimed the boy, seeing the predicament he was in, "you needn't repeat that demand. If you want to be encumbered with trundle-bed trash, just take me a prisoner and let me ride behind you, for I'm awful tired. Besides, it don't make a tinker's darn who I'm with, or where I am, so's I have plenty to eat and skads of fun."

"Hexactly; but you don't look as though you'd been very well fed of late."

"No, I haven't, for a lean, straight fact."

"What's your name, little Yankee; and where do you live?" demanded the officer, dropping his hand to the pommel of his saddle, though keeping the pistol still turned upon the youth.

"I hain't got any name—never had—no home, either. I'm one of the babes of the woods; I are for a fact."

"You hare a young Yankee Doodle, and I'll call you such," replied the insolent Englishman. "My desire now is, sir, that you 'and me that rifle of yours."

"All munificent, major," and Harry handed him his rifle.

"Hi! how do you know I'm a major?"

"You look so dogged much like ole Deacon Hobb's big bulldog what they called Major."

"Hi'll teach you manners, you hinsolent brat hof a Yankee!" and the officer released his foot from the stirrup and kicked at the youth, but failed in reaching him.

"What is your lordship's further pleasure?" asked Harry, with mock politeness.

"In the name of his Majesty, King of Hengland, I command you to march on before me as my prisoner. Hi believe you are a Yankee spy."

"Whew!" whistled Happy Harry, in apparent surprise, "arn't you goin' to let me ride?"

"No words, Yankee Doodle. I have no time to spare in dallying with you. Moreover, it is not for prisoners to make conditions. Right habout!—face!—march, I say."

Harry turned coolly upon his heel, and striking a military attitude and step, marched away before the officer, whistling Yankee Doodle in tones almost as shrill and musical as the fife.

The Englishman rode close behind him with his pistol in his hand; and as fast as the youth could walk, they hurried on through the forest. Belshazzar followed at the horse's heels.

Meanwhile the young borderman's thoughts were busy. He knew his captor was what his uniform proclaimed him to be—an English officer; and there was no doubt in his mind but that the man was on his way to the cavern from which he had so recently escaped, and that he was the messenger expected there from the English province with orders that would set the band in motion. If so, this man's capture would be of incalculable service to the Americans on the northern frontier. At least this was the conclusion Harry came to as he moved on, whistling merrily, to the eminent delight of his pompous captor.

At length their journeying brought them into a glade or opening in the woods across which their course ran, and when near the center of this clearing, a voice in the woods to their right suddenly shouted:

"Halt!"

Harry stopped, and the officer drew rein—both acting involuntarily.

"Dismount there, Englisher!" shouted a voice in the timber before them.

"Surrender!" demanded a voice behind, when the word was taken up and repeated at a dozen different points around the glade.

"Dismount and surrender!" cried that same creaky voice behind them, "or, by heavens, we'll pepper you through and through! Down, I command, in the name of the American Republic!"

The officer looked aghast. His face turned white and his hand trembled. He saw no one,

yet a dozen different, strange voices had demanded his surrender, and he felt positive that a dozen American rifles covered his breast. Former experience had taught British soldiers how Americans fought—that they made no unnecessary display and exposure of their persons. Trained to Indian-fighting, the border militiamen and scouts fought from behind trees, rocks, and whatever else afforded a cover; and this Harry's captor knew, hence his speechless horror.

"Stranger," said Harry turning to the officer, "you're in a slashed ugly pickle, you are, for a clear fact. You're surrounded by ole Wheezy Jack's band of border scouts! and now if you'd like to save your bacon from bein' peppered down with bullets, you'd better give up. I know who you are, and where you're goin'. I just come from thar—that's the cave where Captain Kirby Kale is concealed. You're the messenger they've been expectin' for two days, I know you are, major. They sent me out to watch for you and conduct you to the right place."

"Why didn't you say so before?" replied the major, "and I might have averted this trap!"

"I thought it would be such a good joke on you, major. I'm fond of a joke, and then it'd 'a' tickled the boys to death to see you come marching a friend into camp a prisoner."

"Do those scouts know you are their enemy?"

"Great bal'headed hornits! no; and I hope you won't let on. You havin' me a prisoner 'll keep suspicion down, don't you see, major?"

"Look here, then," said the officer, dismounting and wrenching a large brass button from his cloak, and placing it in Harry's hand, "if you escape, give that to Captain Kale. Tell him what befell me."

"I'll do it, major, with the greatest haste," replied Harry, slipping the button into his pocket.

Then the officer gave up Harry's rifle.

Harry turned aside to depart.

"Do you surrender?" demanded that squeaky voice in the bush, south of the glade.

"I would not were I surrounded by men who were not afraid to come out and fight," replied the Englishman.

Happy Harry, with a mischievous smile upon his face, walked rapidly across the opening and entered the great woods. Belshazzar trudged along at his heels.

There was no reply to the Englishman's last retort. He stood ready to surrender, but no one advanced, and he was afraid to move, for fear the concealed foe would make the least motion an excuse to fire upon him.

Five minutes passed.

"Cowards! knaves! poltroons! why do you not show yourselves?" demanded the humiliated officer. "Do you want an excuse to assassinate a prisoner?"

There was no response. Not a soul stirred from the woods. Birds twittered in the tree-tops, and a huge fox-squirrel perched upon a limb, chattered and barked as if in derision.

Again the officer called to his enemies, but there was still no response.

"I wonder if that boy has betrayed me?" he mused, "and is holding a council with those scouts?"

He waited half an hour—an hour, but with the same result. Nobody appeared to take charge of him. He was puzzled; he was dumfounded. He stood there waiting like a fool, and at length he resolved to move across the glade, cost him what it might. He started off slowly, leading his horse. No one halted him—no one appeared to meet him on the margin of the woods—he could see nor hear no living soul near. He grew more courageous; still he was in a quandary. If any one was watching him, he resolved to know it; so he raised his foot and placed it in the stirrup, but no one bade him displace it. Then he threw himself into the saddle, and putting spurs, galloped away through the woods, at a wild, break-neck speed.

Still no voice halted him, for none was near. Happy Harry was the only living soul within miles of them when these voices bade the officer surrender. They were Harry's voices!

Brave little Harry! he had outwitted the haughty English major, and accomplished his heart's desire. He had got the officer's secret message into his possession, and with it had made good his escape.

And what historian has recorded this daring act of the noble boy? an act which ultimately led to the most decisive blow which England received in the memorable war of 1812, especially in the North-west.

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN RANKIN'S FATE.

WE will now go back in our narrative, and look after Captain Robert Rankin, whom, as will doubtless be remembered, we left on the raft, engaged hand-to-hand with a savage. They were the only two combatants left, and were down, fighting as only desperate enemies fight, when Happy Harry saw them carried out to sea.

In the commencement of the battle, Rankin had received a flesh wound on the arm, that bled profusely, and from loss of blood he gradually grew weaker. But he fought on; he grappled with his adversary and together they went down. Neither one could get at his weapon. Rankin had a knife, the savage a tomahawk; both were in their girdles.

The young officer saw that he must soon end the conflict, or the tide of victory would turn against him. His strength was fast failing, but by a mighty effort the captain succeeded in throwing his adversary partially loose from him. It liberated his right hand, and, quick as a flash, he drew his knife. But the change in their position gave the savage the same advantage, and he drew his tomahawk and raised it.

The hand of the white man was the quicker, and he plunged his knife into the warrior's breast. It partially broke the force of the descending tomahawk, yet the weapon fell heavy enough to strike Rankin senseless on the deck. The savage at full length, fell back in his death throes; a few convulsive quivers, and the form became motionless.

The raft floated on. The moon came up and shone upon the two still bodies drifting further and further away into the great expanse.

Now and then a night-bird screamed along the bosom of the deep and flapped his somber wings above the dead. All else was silent.

The long hours of darkness wore away. The sun, rising, shot his quivering beams of light across St. Clair. They fell upon the raft with its white tent and ghostly faces still drifting on over the waves.

One face was lifeless, staring with stony eyes into the heavens. The other possessed a faint spark of life—Robert Rankin was not dead; but, all through the long night he had lain totally unconscious, and not until the bars of morning light had diffused some of their warmth into his body was he able to move. Little by little he gained strength until he was able to raise his head and glance around him. He saw the boundless sea beneath and the sky above—nothing more. Ay! he did see something else—the stark form of his late adversary, and the white tent which he and Mucklewec had erected.

Gradually he collected his bewildered senses. One by one he recalled the events that had transpired up to the time he had fallen under the blow of the savage's tomahawk. But, where was his friend and guide, Bill Mucklewec? Where was the boy, Harry? What had been their fate?

The sun beating down upon his aching head increased his suffering. He attempted to rise, but sunk to the raft with sheer weakness. On his hands and knees he crawled into the tent out of the hot sun. Here he found everything exactly as they left it at the time Harry gave the alarm of danger. He at once took a flask of brandy from among his effects and swallowed some of the contents. It strengthened him—it renewed his spirits. But he was still unable to rise to his feet. He opened the box in which he had some cold provision, and taking a biscuit and some meat therefrom, ate heartily. This helped him also, and he rapidly grew stronger. The hot sun beat down upon the raft. There was a light breeze blowing from the west, but it was hot and sultry as the breath of a storm.

Birds appeared afar off in the ethereal blue of heaven, tiny specks at first, but gradually growing larger and larger. They were approaching—they were buzzards. They finally took a position above the raft and rose and fell in the air in spiral circles—growing bolder and bolder each minute. They were after the dead—that savage corpse swelling in the hot sun; but Rankin was unable to remove it from their filthy beaks—unable to consign it to a watery grave.

Overcome by a sudden reaction, the young captain sunk down half fainting. He fell asleep, and for hours slept soundly. When he awoke the sun was in the zenith. It was pouring down upon him with a fervid heat. He looked out of the tent and over the great expanse of water. Upon all sides green-clad islands broke the monotony of the waves. The sight was so surprising that for a moment he believed it a delusion—a fantasy of a bewildered brain. He had drifted into the midst of a group of islands.

The young captain's heart now took courage. He looked out upon the islands. How cool and inviting was their green, rustling foliage and silvan shade! and yet, how like mockery, as, with his aching head, he reclined upon the raft beneath the blazing sun, unable to turn the heavy craft aside.

He carefully scanned each island, but no sign of human life was visible upon any of them. There was other life, however, near him. Something black, with great spreading wings, and bright, diamond eyes crossed his vision. It was a huge bird—a buzzard.

Mechanically the young man glanced at the corpse of the savage. He started at the revolting sight. The body swollen; the arms extended as if to clasp some one in their embrace;

the jaws distended, and the protruding eyeballs staring awfully into the heavens. The young man shuddered with horror. A buzzard descended and perched itself on the bloated form. The filthy bird flapped its somber wings, held them extended for a moment, glanced around him, and then peered down into the stony face of the dead.

For a moment it regarded the ghastly object, then it uttered a cry of satisfaction—a cry that grated terribly upon the ears of its auditor.

Another bird immediately descended from the clouds. Then another, and still another, until nearly a dozen of the foul scavengers of the air had assembled at the banquet. They hesitated about beginning the feast. They chattered around the dead as if discussing some point of etiquette, or as if in doubt of something.

Suddenly their necks became outstretched. They uttered a shrill cry of alarm, then they spread their wings, beat the air, rose aloft, and circled swiftly away through the air. What had frightened them?

Rankin crawled to the door of the tent, and gazed out. To his surprise he found the raft floating in a narrow channel between two islands, both of which were covered with a dense growth of luxuriant foliage.

The raft drifted slowly down the channel, keeping away from either island as if guided by the hand of an invisible Charon who was carrying the soul of the suffering man out into the illimitable sea beyond this life.

Nearing the eastern extremity of the island, the helpless man saw a human figure push out from the shrubbery and pause upon the beach. A white woman stood there before him!

Scarcely had Rankin made this discovery ere a shadow crossed his path. Raising his eyes, they fell upon what appeared to be a bright vision—the delusion of a pleasant dream.

It was the face and form of a young girl. She stood upon the raft before him.

CHAPTER XII.

TEMPY, THE ISLAND ENCHANTRESS.

RANKIN'S mind was weak and confused with pain and mental torture. His brain ached and throbbed; his eyes were dimmed and blurred by constant watching and by the dazzling sun, and as he gazed upon the form and face of the young girl before him, he was not sure that she was a being of flesh. There was something so ethereal about the form, something so angelic about the face.

"You are hurt—wounded, stranger," the apparition at length remarked, seeing he was speechless, that there was blood upon him, that his face was pale, and that his eyes were wild and startling.

The sound of her voice broke the spell and drove all doubt and uncertainty from his mind; the being before him was in the flesh, and his very soul cried out in gladness.

"Weak," he responded, in a broken, feverish tone, "I am dying by inches, fair maiden. Look around you, and perhaps you can imagine a tithe of what I have been suffering for what seems an age."

"I have already made myself fully acquainted with the distressed sight this raft presents," the fair girl replied; "but, sir, you are fast drifting out into the open lake, and if you would escape from this raft, now is the time. If you will accept of my assistance, I can help you to the island, where you will receive kind attention."

"Then you live upon the island?" he asked.

"The one to the left, as you float east," she replied.

Rankin staggered to his feet. He could not refuse the proffered kindness of the beautiful girl, even had he known that she was hurrying him into unknown dangers. He had fought bravely against the enemy and the horrors that surrounded him; but, almost in the very hour of his triumph, he yielded to the will of a tender, feeble girl.

But this girl possessed charms of soul and body that true manhood could not resist. She was not over seventeen years of age; her form was a model of exquisite beauty, her face a type of rare loveliness, her eyes were of a soft brown, with the wild, timid expression of a fawn's; her hair was of the color of her eyes, and gathered back from her brow and confined in braids.

She wore the rather pretty, yet odd frock of an Indian princess; but, instead of Indian blood coursing her veins, it might have been that of a royal queen. Her face and hands were tanned by exposure to the summer sun and wind; but this exercise in the open air had been instrumental in imparting a healthful glow to her cheeks, a sparkle to her eyes, and strength and activity to her budding form.

She conducted Rankin to the rear of the raft, where a light canoe was fastened by its painter, and assisting him into it, she seated herself, took up the paddle, and turned toward the island. Plying the blade with remarkable skill, she sent the little craft flying through the waters, and in a very few minutes a landing was effected.

"Why, Tempy—sister!" a voice suddenly ex-

claimed, as Rankin and his fair rescuer stepped ashore; "you were right after all."

The speaker was a woman—she whom the captain had first seen upon the island. She approached them, expressing both surprise and sympathy in the look she gave the wounded man. She was perhaps ten years older than Tempy, a handsome woman, with threads of silver among her dark brown hair, a large, sad eye, and a face upon which was written the indelible hand of hidden sorrow.

"Yes, Margery," replied the maiden, "it was as I told you—a wounded man upon the raft, though he himself insists on it that he is dying."

"Far from it, I hope, stranger," said Margery. "Let us not tarry here," and turning, she led the way along a beaten path, beneath the cool shadows of the dense foliage.

Rankin and Tempy followed, moving very slowly, for the captain was so weak he reeled as he walked.

Threading their way through the grove, they finally debouched into an opening, in the center of which stood a log-cabin, half buried in an arbor of wild cucumbers and morning glories. In the rear of the building was a vegetable garden, in front a garden of flowers that sent forth a mingled odor sweet as the perfumes of Araby or Ind.

Rankin was conducted into the cabin, which was furnished with neatness and plenty. Tempy gave him water in a stone basin with which to make an ablution, and after this needed operation had been performed, he was seated in an easy-chair, when Margery, with womanly tenderness, dressed his wounds. Then she brought some brandy and water, and gave him as a stimulant, and in a few minutes Robert Rankin felt that he was himself again. He conversed freely with his fair Samaritan friends, giving a full history of his late perilous adventure, which eventually led him a guest to their cabin.

The females, however, evaded all questioning concerning their secluded home. Rankin did not come boldly out and ask what calling their male friends followed for a livelihood; he approached them with all the caution of a general approaching an enemy; but they proved themselves the most disciplined skirmishers, and defeated him at every point. Of course, this led to the supposition that the life of the women and their friends was shrouded in some mystery, and so he asked no further questions.

Finally the conversation turned to the probable war with England. I say probable, although the war was at that time fully inaugurated, and Rankin knew it, but he affected ignorance in order to test the knowledge and sympathy of his two female friends.

He soon found that they were ignorant of the threatened war, but as they expressed the strongest sympathy for the American cause, he soon became more communicative.

"War," he said, "has been declared, and already the enemy is moving across the frontier. Mackinaw is beleaguered, and in case it falls the straits will be open to the English fleet."

The women were greatly surprised by this startling information, and expressed fears for their own safety.

"The English in Canada have anticipated the war," continued Rankin, "and have already taken such steps as will result in a terrible blow to our country, unless we can manage to be prepared for them. There is a party of the enemy now in the territory, waiting only for orders from head-quarters to strike the blow."

"Where is that party of enemies now?" asked Margery.

"I have been unable to find out; my impression is, however, that they are concealed in squads along the western shores of St. Clair, in the heavy woods, or they may be guests of their red allies, the Indians."

"When were orders from the British commander expected, do you know?"

"During the week."

"Then you are in the secrets of the British movements?"

"I am Robert Rankin, with the commission of captain of dragoons," replied Rankin, evasively, and with a smile.

"I see you are in uniform," continued Margery.

"I'd have fared better without it under the circumstances."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the keen-witted Margery. "I comprehend the meaning of your evasions—you are a spy!"

"The same as a dead one, though. I am wounded—unable to move, and will be so for some days to come."

"Have you dispatches or word of importance to carry to any post or village?"

Rankin looked up and smiled. He made no reply.

"I know," continued Margery, "that the question is a bold one in one sense of the word, and foolish in another; but, sir, you can trust Tempy and I. This I assure you on the honor of a woman."

"But a true spy intrusts his secrets to no one

but him whose ears they are intended for," replied Rankin.

"I ask not for your secrets, Captain Rankin; but I thought, if I could do so, I would take upon myself the responsibility of concluding your mission for you."

"You? a feeble woman!" exclaimed Rankin; "why you are weary leagues from the military post at Laketown."

"I care not for that," she replied, with a firmness that denoted her courage and patriotism; "a woman can serve her country as well as a man. Tell me what I am to say and I will start!"

"I cannot, Margery," the young captain said, regretfully; "my manhood shrinks from sending a woman out alone on a wide, watery waste. Perhaps I will be able to strike out sooner than I expect."

"I know these waters well—perhaps far better than you, captain; besides, I am no novice in water-craft," Margery persisted. "To refuse me the conclusion of your journey may bring disaster to our country and entail the loss of hundreds of innocent lives."

"That's all true—very true, Margery; and if your ability is equal to your persistent desire to go to Laketown you can accomplish the mission. But then—"

"I'm a woman!" interrupted Margery, with asperity in her tone.

"I have nothing more to add, Margery," the young man said; and removing one of his boots, he unscrewed the heel and took from the receptacle therein a small leaden ball, which he handed to her, saying: "That contains the message I desire to be placed in the hands of none other than Colonel Miller, the commandant at Laketown. Had you not been a woman I would never have surrendered it otherwise than with my life."

"You have faith in woman's honesty, then, and so I shall endeavor to strengthen that faith," replied Margery, with the resolute determination of a brave and noble nature. "God willing, this message shall be delivered into the hands of Colonel Miller."

Rankin was now highly impressed with the character of this woman. He saw that she was more than an ordinary personage in intellect, and was fully aware of the responsibilities and dangers she was assuming for the sake of her country.

The two women left Rankin's presence and went into an adjoining room—Margery to prepare for her long, perilous journey.

The young captain awaited their return impatiently. The soft, brown eyes, the pretty face, the sweet voice and gentle kindness of Tempy had made an indelible impression upon his heart, and he could hardly help thanking the terrible fate that had thrown her in his way. He had recovered so rapidly, or, at least, felt so much better, since his advent in the island home that his wounds gave him no uneasiness whatever. His heart feasted upon the mysterious beauty of the angelic Tempy, and his body grew stronger.

At the same time there was a struggle going on within his breast. His spirit of manhood rebuked him for surrendering his message, which was of the most vital importance, to Margery; while he felt it was a duty that he owed his country to have the message delivered at all hazards. But, while he looked upon Margery as a woman of more than ordinary ability, it was his manly courtesy that rebelled at the idea of placing such a herculean task upon the shoulders of a woman.

While speculating over the situation, Tempy burst into the room like a sunbeam, her face radiant with joy.

A little sailor hat, trimmed with blue, was upon her head. Gloves were upon her hands, and a light, purple scarf was around her shoulders.

"I'm going," she said, with a look of delight, turning to Rankin.

"Where?" asked the latter.

"To the post with the message. I prevailed on sister Margery to let me go as her health is somewhat feeble. Besides, I think I know the lake better than she does."

"Tempy, you—" began Rankin, but he was interrupted by the maiden, who exclaimed:

"I hope you will not object to my going, Mr. Rankin. I thought it my duty to take Margery's place, since she had so kindly volunteered to conclude your mission. So I wish you a happy sojourn here, Mr. Rankin, and a speedy recovery. Good-by, Margery!"

"Tempy!" cried Rankin, starting wildly up; "stay! do not go!"

But Tempy did not hear him; she was gone. He attempted to rise and follow her; but his limbs refused to support their weight and he sunk back, half unconscious, in his chair.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ENGLISH BRIG-OF-WAR

HAPPY HARRY was soon far beyond the glade where he had so cunningly outwitted the king's officer and messenger. His face was all aglow with joy and triumph as he sped away through the woods, fast as his legs would carry him. He never ceased running until he reached the

lake shore, where, out of breath, he sat down to rest and examine the button that the unsuspecting Englishman had intrusted to his care.

"Great hoppin' hornits, Belshazzar!" he exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "this is jest more'n fun, ar'n't it, ole chum? And, mortal pizen! didn't I do it up to that Britisher slicker'n a peeled sapplin'? I didn't know I war so good reachin' out with my voice. I didn't, for a sacred fact. By George! he war a kind of a spy, that red-coat, and I'd ort to 'a' taken him prisoner; but then, what did I want with him after I got the feller's secret? Ho! out here, ole button. What news from the headquarters of the ole king's army? Open, my pretty silver bauble, and let it out."

After repeated efforts, he succeeded in unscrewing the button, which he found to be a mere shell of silver, the cavity of which was filled with a neatly-folded paper of the finest quality.

"Sweet Jerusalem! there lays the kernel of the silver nut!" exclaimed the youth, looking at the paper as if half afraid to touch it, for fear it would vanish like a bubble.

While thus occupied, Belshazzar uttered a low, plaintive whine.

A twig cracked in the undergrowth not far away, and was succeeded by a rustling of foliage.

Happy Harry sprung to his feet, slipped the button into his pocket, and cocked his rifle.

A man emerged from the undergrowth, and a look of profound astonishment mounted his face as he confronted the young wood-tramp.

The man was Long Beard, the Giant Woodman.

"Hoppin' hornits," burst from the boy's lips, and he dug his knuckles into his eyes, as if to remove a mist of doubt gathered over them, "it can't be so—it's a mistake, it is, for an ugly fact."

"Hullo, my little waif! you are safe, thank God," said the giant, advancing toward him.

"Safe? why, that's no name for it," replied Harry. "Great hornits! but I'm proper delighted and majestically glad to meet you. I am, for a fact, govenir. Giv us your ten-acre paw—there! och!—squeeze gently; you've a bear's hug in that fist. But, whar ye been keepin' your corporosity, ginerall?"

"In the woods, on the lake, along the shore, looking for you."

"And I've been lookin' for you, ginerall."

"Well, the objects of our search have been found. What news have you, Harry?"

"Nothin' but some good news; but wasn't them a smashin' set of fellers we bunked with t'other night at the cave?"

"A notorious set of scoundrels, I must say," returned the giant, emphatically.

"They had you haltered up pretty snug, hadn't they, Big Beard?"

"Ay, my boy; and did you know what I do of that man, Kirby Kale, you would not wonder that I was haltered up so securely."

"You don't say, do you, ginerall? Why, great hornits! arn't they all Englishmen?"

"Most of them."

"And is Kirby Kale?"

"Yes; and as mean a man as ever breathed."

"Wal, by hornits!—but, say, Big Beard, did you see that feller in the cave with his head tied up and arm in a sling?"

"I did; and I saw him spurn your body with his foot when you lay apparently dead in the cavern."

"That was the traitor, William Mucklewee, Esquire, whom I banged over the head and sent a-bouncing and a-waltzin' into the lake—the very demon that tried to betray Rankin into the savages' power. But, Big Beard, I think them devils at the cave are waitin' to do some awfully bloody work, I do, for a serious fact. They are English soldiers, I know they are, for I saw their uniforms stickin' around the cavern one place and another. I think they're waitin' there in disguise for some orders to strike—in fact, I know they are; and them orders are to come through a messenger expected from Canada. And, would you believe it, ginerall! sure as I'm livin', me and that messenger had a little difference awhile ago. He just scooped me right in a prisoner of war, in the name of the king, the sun, moon, and stars. I wasn't hard to take, and Belshazzar, he just tucked his tail atwixt his legs and away we marched. But, suddenly, my friend of the king had summons from different quarters to yield himself up to superior force, that war hid in the woods not fur away. Before he could reply, I turned and informed him he war in what might be termed a snap, and so on. Then I told him who he was, and whar he war goin', and that I belonged at the cave and was out lookin' for him, and that I'd let him capter me for the fun of it, and a whole lot of just sich—sich funny things. This tickled the royal major of his majesty's army, and quicker'n wink he jerked a button off his coat and handed it to me, with orders to deliver the same to Captain Kirby Kale. The fool thought he war surrounded by an army of American scouts, though not one of them could be seen, and he thought the jig war up with him. Well, I took the button,

and away I went, lickey-te-split, leavin' the great English dispatch bearer from across the briny deep, waitin' for the Americans to file out of the wood and salt him down. But nary scout filed. The fact of it war jist here: there wasn't a scout within miles of him, and for all I know, that poor, deluded man from the moon is standing thar in the opening yit."

"You tricked him with that tongue of yours, did you?" asked Long Beard.

"Didn't I, though, ginerall?" replied Harry, with a sly wink. "I jist had 'em demandin' his surrender all around, and you ort to 'a' heard the one with a creaky voice. Dogged if I didn't like to overdo it on that voice. But, here's the button, Big Beard, already unscrewed, ready for an investigation of its contents."

He handed the button to the giant, who removed the paper therefrom. He found the latter to be of the finest texture, capable of being compressed into a very small space. It was nearly a foot square when spread open. Upon the upper half was traced, by a skillful hand, a map of all that portion of the United States and Territories lying north of the forty-second degree of north latitude, also a portion of Canada. There were red dots upon it, which doubtless represented the location of the American posts of defense. It was also traced with blue lines, suppose to represent the anticipated routes of the English army in their invasion of the republic. Beneath this map was an explanation written in cipher, which the giant at once set to work upon to translate. It seemed as though he had had some experience in such things before, for in a few minutes he had unraveled the secret of the whole. And what a secret worth knowing it was to the citizens of the American republic!

It proved to be a key to the proposed operations of the English army in the United States, and which, if successful, would place the whole northern frontier and the great lakes in British possession!

On the back of this map was written, also in cipher, these words:

"CAPTAIN KIRBY KALE—Money secured General Hull's retreat from Canada, and I believe it will secure the surrender of Detroit. Try it, at any rate, if your present movement should prove a failure."

"MAJ.-GEN. BROCK."

"Great hoppin' hornits!" exclaimed Harry, when Long Beard had revealed the secrets of the paper; "afore such a thing shall happen, I'll run my very soul out. I'll start this very hour for the nearest military post. Wouldn't you, Long Whiskers, if you were a little frisky boy?"

"I might, it is true, Harry. But then, this is a matter of such vital importance to our country that no risks must be encountered in delivering it to the proper authorities. There is no great hurry in the matter, therefore you can afford to take your time and run no risks. Now, if you will go with me to the Pleiades Islands you can take a boat and reach Laketown in half the time you can go there on foot."

"Just as you say, Long Beard. I'm alers willin' to obey them as are older than me. There's my dear ole bunkmate, Davy Darrett, whom I hain't seen for a month, who's alers right on sich things as b'long to the border."

"Then come along with me."

They moved along the shore and in a few minutes came to where the giant's little schooner was tied up. Boarding her, they at once put to sea.

As they pulled out from shore Belshazzar uttered a low whine, and glancing back toward the shore, Long Beard and Harry saw the cause of his uneasiness. An Indian girl, whom Harry recognized as the princess Eelelah, was standing on a prominent point of the shore, waving her hand toward them in a violent manner; and the very instant she ceased she threw herself over into the lake.

"Oh, great hornits!" cried Happy Harry; "it's Eelelah, and she's drowned herself!"

"Nay, nay, Harry," responded Long Beard; "that girl is our friend. Those gestures were intended as a warning. Look! she is swimming around the base of that rock, evidently to reach the opposite side unobserved. Enemies to us must be approaching the point from whence we embarked—ah, there they come now!"

Fully twenty men, with flashing uniforms and bristling muskets, emerged from the great woods.

It was a company of British soldiers, and at their head Happy Harry could distinguish the forms of Captain Kirby Kale and his late captor, the English major.

"Halt there!" cried Kale, at the top of his lungs, and the soldiers brought their muskets into position.

But Long Beard and Harry paid no attention to his order.

"Halt, or we'll fire!" again shouted Kale.

Quicker than a flash Happy Harry threw his rifle to his shoulder and fired at the foe. A soldier fell at the feet of his comrades.

The next instant a line of smoke burst from the English ranks and the crash of twenty muskets rolled along the waves. Like hail

their bullets pattered against the side of the little schooner, but Long Beard and Harry having sought shelter in the cabin escaped unharmed.

The giant at once ran up another sail and soon they were out of reach of the enemy's guns. Then the two again went on deck, and, to their surprise, saw that a number of savages had joined the English, and all together were holding a consultation.

With his field-glass Long Beard scanned the allies closely, and while thus engaged he happened to run his eye along the coast, when, to his surprise and astonishment, he discovered a small sail bearing down the wind toward them. It was over a league away, yet he could see distinctly that it was a brig carrying a gun fore and aft and flying the English colors!

"By heavens, Harry!" exclaimed the giant, "an English vessel has gained our lake! Look off here and you'll see her."

Happy Harry took the glass and, having scanned the sail, confirmed his friend's statement.

"Strikes me, general," he said, "that we're in a fair way for a bit of naval engagement."

"The chances for a fight are good, but our condition to stand up to a brig carrying heavy guns is not very promising of good results. Our best hold lies in flight, and I shall press every inch of canvas into service and attend promptly to the helm and our course. It is now one o'clock, and it will take us until evening to reach the Pleiades."

"Well, all right, general; drive on your gig, and if there's anything that we can assist you in doing make a clean breast of it and we'll be on hand like a dozen warts."

"Keep a watch on the brig, Harry."

"I'll do so, general; I will, for a solemn fact."

Half an hour had passed in silence when he suddenly exclaimed:

"There, by hornits! Captain Kale has succeeded in hailing the brig and two boats have been sent ashore."

"Then depend upon it, every effort will be made to overhaul us, Harry," said Long Beard, "and you in that English messenger's hands and I in Kale's, we would fare badly."

Suddenly the boom of a cannon came down the wind, and glancing back, the fugitives saw a cloud of smoke hanging upon the brig's prow.

Long Beard took the glass and brought it to bear upon the enemy. A cry burst from his lips.

"She has sighted us, and is giving chase! Now for liberty, an English prison, or death, Harry!" he exclaimed, a stern, desperate look kindling in his eyes, and his great form growing majestic with the firm resolutions that strung every nerve and inspired his soul.

The race now began in earnest between the little schooner and the brig-of-war. Silent and firm the giant woodman stood at the helm, while Happy Harry stood aft gazing away at the pursuing enemy with a kind of a vague fascination, at the same time humming softly to himself:

"My name was Captain Kidd
When I sailed, when I sailed."

CHAPTER XV.

THE PLEIADES NIGHT-WATCH.

CAPTAIN ROBERT RANKIN could not forgive himself for having made known the secret, or rather giving up the dispatches, that led the fair little Tempy to brave the dangers of a long journey by land and water.

He walked the floor in feverish agony. Margery endeavored to calm his emotions.

"Tempy is not in half the danger you are, Captain Rankin," she said, "and I pray you will not worry yourself into a fever over her departure. She is well acquainted with the lake, and I dare say will reach her destination in safety."

"Not before night, though."

"She will do well if she reaches it by to-morrow night."

"Well, I cannot rest easy until I know harm has not befallen that brave young girl who virtually saved my life. But, kind friend, how soon do you expect your friends in?"

"Not before evening. Father usually returns about sunset."

"Is your father a fisherman?"

"Simply a recluse," replied Margery, evasively. "He has a penchant for secluded places, hence the reason that we dwell here among the romantic Pleiades."

"And is this secluded life agreeable to you and your sister Tempy?"

"We love our father, and are contented wherever he is happiest."

Around this lonely island cabin and its lovely inmates there hung a mystery to Captain Rankin. He would have had it solved, for already he had become deeply interested in the family's history. He did not hesitate to admit that he had fallen desperately in love with the fair Tempy, although he tried, at first, to convince himself that it was but a momentary infatuation, and that the women might be the children of some old outcast hiding there, away from

the hounds of the law. But his better judgment would assert itself, and the exalted innocence and honor that surrounded the women stood confessed.

Margery extended every kindness in her power to alleviate the suffering of her guest, and in her gentle administrations there was a power as of magic. To him, she and Tempy had been good Samaritans—Sisters of Mercy—reserved in nothing that makes woman noble, gentle, loved and companionable.

The hours dragged wearily along to Rankin. He watched the sun changing in the doorway, and at times it seemed as though an hour made no difference in the position of the light and shadow. But, despite his impatience, the sun was gradually sinking westward, and finally dropped behind the tree-tops. Then the twilight shadows began to gather in the cabin. A light breeze, sweetened with the perfume of wild flowers, stirred the green drapery of the trees. Away out along the margin of the island a bull-frog sent forth his harsh, rasping croak, while a solitary cricket chirruped shrilly under the door-step, its ungrateful music harmonizing with the gathering gloom and depressing solitude.

Margery sat down at the open window, and, gazing out over the lake, hummed a low, plaintive tune to herself. Her thoughts were far away; she was soon in deep meditation.

Meanwhile Rankin's thoughts turned upon his own situation. The silence and shadows filled him with vague forebodings.

Both were suddenly started by the boom of a cannon breaking upon the silence. It rolled down from the north with a stunning shock.

"Oh, my God!" cried Margery, and she sprang to her feet and ran out of the cabin.

Rankin rose and followed her, tottering almost as he went.

From a point where they could obtain a partial view of the twilight-enshrouded lake, they beheld two sails. One of them, a little schooner, was already within a few rods of the island. The other, a brig, carrying the English colors, and a gun fore and aft, stood on the northern extremity of the group of islands, over a mile away. It had evidently been anchored there, for all sails had been lowered.

"That is father's sail approaching there," exclaimed Margery, in delight.

"Do you know that other one off north?" asked Rankin.

"I do not; it's a stranger. Father will know, perhaps."

The little schooner soon turned into the shore. A tall man, with a long, snowy beard, stepped ashore, followed by a boy and a large dog. It was Long Beard, Harry and his dog.

Long Beard, then, was Margery's father.

Having secured his little craft by means of a heavy rope, he turned and proceeded with the boy and his dog toward the cabin, to be met by Margery and Rankin.

Before a word of greeting had passed between the father and daughter, Harry shouted, as his eyes fell upon Captain Rankin:

"Hurrah for glory! hoppin' hornits! there he is, general; the very identikil chap that war in the big fight with us on the raft."

"Yes, I am the man, my good fellow," responded Rankin, extending his hand toward the youth. "I remember you very well, my brave and peerless youth. The last I saw of you was during the fight on that trap of a raft."

"I have a distinct remembrance of that raft, captain, and a little unpleasantness we had on it. That was a gory old fight, it was, for a stubborn fact."

"Yes, and I have wondered a hundred times how you and Mucklewee came out of the fight."

"Mucklewee!" exclaimed Harry, indignantly; "darn his hide! he got off with a basted head, I'm sorry to say."

"You speak severely of my guide, Harry."

"Your guide!" the youth replied, with disdain. "Captain, didn't you know that he war a traitor?"

"I did not, Harry."

"It's a holy fact, captain; it war him that got you into a confused muss with the redskins. He is a British emissary."

Rankin was confounded by this intelligence, and but for the sober look on Harry's face would have disputed his word. He hurriedly connected different events that had occurred since he and Mucklewee had been together, and out of the links thus collected he gathered sufficient material to construct a chain of strong evidence corroborating Harry's story.

Meanwhile Margery and her father had stepped aside, when the former at once informed her parent of what had been going on since his departure. The giant seemed deeply affected by the news of Tempy's departure; at the same time, however, he expressed his approval of her going forth on a journey of such importance to their country.

"But at the same time she may be in less danger than we are in," he said, in concluding his remarks on that subject, and introducing another.

"Why so, father? Does that sail off to the north menace our safety?"

"It certainly does; it is an English brig-of-war, and has chased us since one o'clock, several times firing upon us."

"How does it come that English war-vessels are on this lake father?"

"Why, Margery, war has been fully inaugurated, and the armies are moving. Hull has relinquished the conquest of Malden, and retreated on Fort Detroit. The English are already across the frontier; but our greatest danger, Margery, does not come from that source"—he spoke in a low tone. "Night before last I was a prisoner in the stronghold of a company of British soldiers under command of none other than Captain Kale, alias Sir Eugene Nealmurry."

"Oh, God of mercy!" cried Margery, clasping her brow, while her face turned ghastly pale and her form reeled as if about to fall. Her father drew her arm in his to support her, and then narrated the story of his capture by Kirby Kale, and his release by Happy Harry.

Finally matters were explained all around, when Long Beard led the way to the cabin. He introduced Harry to Margery and his secluded home.

The youth was welcomed by Margery in words that filled his young heart with joy. He had never before received such praise and thanks as Margery bestowed upon him. He felt that he was indeed a hero.

Margery soon had an ample supper prepared for all, when Harry and Rankin were invited to the board. The Wild Boy and his host did justice to the meal, for they had fasted since morning.

Before night had closed in Long Beard made certain of the brig-of-war's position. He found it was still standing off, north of the Pleiades. But he knew that the enemy would not remain idle during the night—that they would, in all probability, send out a boat to reconnoiter and scout among the islands. To defeat the success of such an expedition was the main object with the giant, for if his cabin was discovered, he knew its destruction would be inevitable.

Happy Harry, ever ready for adventure, volunteered to keep on the move with his dog during the night, venturing the assertion that no boat could approach undiscovered.

The night was dark—extremely dark, the sky being overcast with a heavy, gray mist. Everything was as still as though the heavy gloom subdued the very pulses of the air.

Like two shadows, Harry and his dog crept through the undergrowth that skirted the margin of the little green clad islands; like shadows they stole along the beach. Now and then they stopped to listen—the master with his hand upon his dog's head. The animal's hearing was most acute; did he detect a suspicious sound, a toss of the head, or a low whine would announce the fact to his master.

Thus for hours they continued their watch around the island. Harry was growing drowsy and careless for the want of excitement when his attention was suddenly attracted by the surging of the waves along the bank.

"There's no wind to make them waves," the youth reasoned with himself, "and what's makin' them tickle the shore is more'n I can tell, 'less there's sumthin' in the strait between the two islands. If it wasn't so wickedly dark a feller and his dog might see sumthin'. Oh, great hornits, Bell, I hope nothin' will befall these folks here. That poor woman looks sad enough anyhow, and then the old general's takin' on so 'bout his t'other gal that's gone to Laketown. Gracious! if we ever git through this bald-headed darkness alive, I'll strike out after that little gal of his'n. And we'll find her, too, or expand a blood-vessel in the attempt. 'Sh!—harkee, 'Shaz—ar!—jiggered if there isn't—if there doesn't come a canoe creeping through the darkness like a spell of death! And now who is it?—and whar are they goin'? Dog their riggin's, they've got muffled oars, and that means deviltry the world over. They're a pisen pack from the brig. They're Englishers come down here to reconnoiter, and I'll be confuted if I know whether to git 'em over here and exterminate 'em, or fire into 'em and let 'em slide. But then I guess I'll do neither one; I'll trick 'em," and so saying, he called out:

"Boat ahoy!"

The voice seemed to come from the opposite island, six rods or more away.

"Ayl ay!" was the response from the barge.

"Who goes there?" demanded the voice on the island.

The crash of half a dozen muskets was the response. A groan issued from the island. The boat turned in toward the shore, and Harry laughed to himself.

"Gue-s we laid him out," he heard one of the unknown boatmen say.

Quicker than we can record the fact, Happy Harry had stripped off his clothing, and, with his knife between his teeth, entered the water and struck out directly toward the enemy's boat. Belshazzar at his side, both swam in silence.

The boat, a six-oared barge, belonging to the brig-of-war, reached the bank, when all the occupants but one landed and went to searching

the undergrowth for the body of their supposed victim. The one left to watch the boat remained seated within it. His musket was leaning against the side. The oars hung loose in the rowlocks. The stillness was unbroken save by the noise made by the men among the rustling bushes.

Thus several moments passed; then a tiny wave broke against the side of the boat and chafed the bank. The soldier noticed it. Instinctive precaution made him a good soldier. He recognized, in an instant, the fact that there was no air to stir a ripple on the lake, and very naturally concluded that the water had been disturbed by something in it. He bent his head and listened; he heard the very faintest noise like that which is made by the breast of a small animal cleaving the waters as it glides along. He peered into the deep, dark night around him, and upon the bosom of the water; not two feet from the side of the canoe, he imagined he saw a round, spherical object resting upon the waves. Mechanically he put out his hand toward it, when to his horror he felt a pair of sharp fangs close like a vise upon it.

A cry of horrible agony escaped the man's lips, but Belshazzar held on to his hand, while Happy Harry, springing up into the boat, pitched the man overboard.

The youth was instantly warned of other dangers by the hasty approach of the men on shore. Seizing an oar he pushed the boat out upon the bosom of the night-enshrouded waters. His dog followed him. The unfortunate soldier swam ashore and briefly as possible told the story of his mishap.

Then the party discovered that they had been entrapped—at least enticed ashore upon an island—from whence they could not escape.

The soldiers heard the boat with the unknown enemy retreating, and discharged their muskets in the direction of the sound, but in the darkness they shot at random and Harry escaped untouched.

CHAPTER XVI. THE BESIEGED CABIN.

HAPPY HARRY having crossed the channel and made fast his boat, hurried to the cabin of Long Beard and reported his adventure.

The giant at once became very uneasy, for should the enemy discover his location escape would be impossible.

"I must get away from here," he said. "It will be death—yea! more than death to me and my children, should we fall into the power of the English. We must escape under cover of this night. I will move our effects most needed from the house and place them on board the schooner, and then we will embark for some southern port."

"I am afraid, friend Long Beard," remarked Rankin, "that if you once get away from these islands, the frigate will run you down. Perhaps we could dodge the enemy here, at least until your daughter Tempy returns from the post. Of course, Colonel Miller will give her a strong escort, and this assistance will enable us to get off."

"Tempy may not get back for a week, and possibly not at all," answered the giant, half desponding.

"I'll tell you, general," said Harry, his face aglow with joy and boyish excitement; "if you'll just stay here and stick to the island like molasses to a boy's hair, dog my cats if I don't either kapter or sink that British brig—me and Belshazzar will. We'll just get into the lake and h'ist her right over—we'll be a torpedo to that boat; we will, for a fact."

Although he questioned the youth's ability to do even half as much, Long Beard's main reliance was centered upon the Wild Boy of the Woods. He had seen the lad tested under the most trying circumstances—he had seen him perform deeds of daring that none but Happy Harry could have accomplished. So the giant recluse sent the youthful borderman to watch that the enemy did not effect a landing on his island; and this precaution was not adopted a moment too soon. Those at the brig had heard the firing of musketry down among the Pleiades, and at once dispatched another boat to the scene of action with half a dozen armed men. This boat had just effected a landing when Harry discovered it; and having picked up those left upon the opposite island, a force of a dozen armed men were now ready to invade the retreat of the mysterious Long Beard.

Hurrying back to the cabin, the youth made known his second discovery. Long Beard, now thoroughly alarmed, at once proposed to evacuate the island. He could not be induced to attempt a defense, although his cabin had been constructed and provided with every requisite for defensive measures. Something besides a fear of the result of an English invasion seemed to prey upon his mind and that of his daughter, like some awful horror.

To Rankin there appeared to be some secret underlying the whole of this man's fears, and he was at once led to believe that there was a significant mystery connected with his seclusion.

It required but a few moments for the father and daughter to prepare for departure. A change or two of raiment, some cooked food and a few articles of bedding were all they attempted to carry away with them; and even these would not have been taken had they not been absolutely necessary for the comfort of the party during the journey. They left the cabin in no disorder. On the contrary it was in its usual primness, so that the invaders would not suspect it of being deserted.

Harry led the way along the dim path toward the point where Long Beard had left the boat—Margery and Rankin following, while the giant brought up the rear. As they neared the water a slight noise arrested Harry's attention.

Stopping still, he cautioned his friends, and requested them to remain standing there until he crept forward and reconnoitered.

Softly he moved away, and for several minutes a deathlike stillness reigned. Finally the lad came back with the startling intelligence that the schooner was in possession of the enemy and that all escape from the island was cut off.

"Then let us go back and do last what we should have done first—intrench ourselves within the cabin," said the giant in a husky tone.

"Govenir, we—that's me and Bell—don't keer about coopin' up to fight. We'll stay outside and bushwhack on the corner—kind o' split the attention of the foe should they attack the cabin. If you fellers 'll do your duty inside like a dose of p'isen, we'll be a red-hot blister outside, and I'll bet we'll doctor the red-coats up magnificently. They can't catch me, that's certain, if I've got elbow-room. This island's a little cramped for me to operate on without crowding upon the lake, and the water there's so tarnal thin that it lets a feller in. But go ahead, govenir; scoot back into your cabin and then let into 'em bald-headed jayhawks like a swarm of hornits with fresh sharpened javelins. I've heard say that a British soldier can't stand fire half as well as an average Yankee-doodler, and I propose to test the matter. Yes, I'll keep outside and run a side-show of my own, general; and I'll bet we'll make 'em think we're runnin' a little judgment-day, too, of our own. Bet you'll hear somethin' drap every time little 'Brown Chick' here chirps," and he patted the breech of his boy's rifle significantly.

And so Long Beard, Margery and Captain Rankin returned to the cabin, which had not yet been found by the enemy. Hastening inside, the recluse barred the door, and at once proceeded to put the cabin in the best possible shape for defense. The plugs were removed from the loop-holes that pierced all the four walls of the house. A quantity of water was placed in the middle of the room ready for any emergency in which it might be needed. A lamp was lighted and placed behind a screen where its rays would fall only on an unexposed spot.

The face of Long Beard wore a serious yet determined look. His voice was low and firm, his movements like that of the lion.

Margery's pale face and heavy, mournful eyes evinced the deepest emotions, yet with resolute step she moved about the room arranging things so as to afford every facility for defense.

"Now I am ready," said Long Beard, finally, as he looked to the priming of his rifle.

"Give me a rifle, friend," said Rankin, "that I may assist." And the giant brought him a rifle and brace of pistols.

Five minutes later there came a sharp, violent rap, rap upon the door.

"They are come, father," whispered Margery.

The enemy were at the door.

"Who is there?" demanded Long Beard.

"Persons desirous of admittance," was the response.

Long Beard turned to Margery and in a husky tone asked:

"Daughter, did you recognize that voice?"

"Oh, my God, yes! it is his—Eugene Nealmurry's!"

"Yes; Nealmurry's, alias Captain Kirby Kale's."

Fear seemed to hold the father and daughter spellbound for awhile.

Rap, rap, rap, came the summons at the door again.

"I cannot admit you," Long Beard replied, rallying from his momentary stupor with the look of a lion starting from a nap.

"We seek admittance on peaceful measures, but cannot accept a refusal," came from without.

"Then you threaten," replied Long Beard.

"We must be admitted; if you refuse we will be compelled to force an entrance."

"You will do so at your peril."

"We demand admittance in the name of His Royal Majesty the King of England!" and the speaker emphasized his words with a thunderous rap upon the door.

"And I refuse to admit you in the name of His Excellency the President of the American Republic."

The violent crash of musket-butts against the door was the only response. The door, being made of heavy oak boards, however, refused to yield to the terrific blows.

Long Beard thrust the muzzle of a pistol through a loop-hole, and fired into the crowd in front of the cabin. Evidently the shot was without effect, but a violent exclamation of surprise and the rush of feet followed. The party retreated a few paces and poured a volley of shot into the door, but not one of the leader missiles pierced the hard, oaken barricade.

A deep silence succeeded the crash of musketry, and the English were wondering what effect it had had upon the inmates of the cabin, when they were suddenly surprised by a loud, shrill "chirp, chirp," like that of a half-grown chicken when lost from the rest of the brood. It issued from the thicket to the right. One of the men laughed and said:

"We're disturbing the hen-roost."

At this instant a tongue of flame leaped from the thicket to the left, a rifle rung out on the air, and a cry of mortal agony escaped the lips of one of the soldiers as he fell dead at the feet of his comrades.

"Charge the thicket," thundered the voice of the commandant; "bayonet the assassin!"

With fixed bayonets eleven men charged into the thicket, through the thicket, straight onward until they reached the water's brink. But they found no enemy. They turned and hurried back to the side of their dead comrade. Four men carried the body down to the boat.

Then the party held a consultation as to their further movements, which resulted in sending to the brig for reinforcements.

In an hour's time five more men landed upon the island, and the attack was renewed upon the cabin. But the defenders were upon the alert, and met them with a sharp and deadly fire, forcing them to retire under cover of the woods with three men killed and wounded. Here they again held a short deliberation over their repulse, and the probability of success should they attempt to force an entrance by attacking the cabin on both sides—at the door and window. In the midst of their talk that ominous "chirp, chirp" was heard again, this time coming from the direction of the cabin before them; but it was immediately followed by the whip-like report of a rifle behind them, and another of the soldiers fell dead.

"Search the island till that murderous devil is found!" commanded Kale, and he launched away, sword in hand, through the undergrowth, followed by his men.

Like so many hounds just freed from the leash, they beat through the shadowy grove in search of the enemy. The island was not more than three acres in area, but being overgrown with dense vegetation, it afforded the skulker every advantage over his enemy.

The noise made by the soldiers advancing through the thicket enabled Harry to determine their exact position, and getting into their rear, he kept along a few paces behind them. Accustomed to the woods, the youth glided along without creating a sound above the rustling bushes stirred by those that preceded him.

An hour's search proved fruitless. The soldiers had not seen nor heard one thing of the enemy, and, under the impression that he had left the island, they returned to the cabin and renewed their demand for its unconditional surrender.

As usual, they were promptly met with a refusal, when a vigorous and determined assault began. The soldiers were more careful, and took a position close in against the wall where the defenders could not reach them. The only decisive resistance now came from that enemy skulking in the darkness outside. No sooner had they renewed their attack upon the building than that hidden foe began his work of death. Three soldiers were detailed to watch, with cocked rifles, for the flash of his rifle, and shoot him. But they were always deceived by that ominous "chirp." If they sought the enemy at the point whence the sound came, death was sure to come from some other direction.

Captain Kale concentrated all his force against the cabin door. With the heavy butts of their muskets they hammered away unceasingly. At first it was like pounding upon a heavy wall, but the door finally began to rattle upon its huge wooden hinges. This encouraged the besiegers, and they worked away all the harder. The door grew more and more shackling, and finally burst from its hinges and fell inward with a crash.

The tall, majestic form of Long Beard confronted the soldiers in the doorway. He discharged his pistol in their very faces, then he threw the worthless weapon aside, and with his huge fist fought the enemy.

Captain Rankin came to the assistance of his host. Margery crouched with terror on the floor, murmuring a prayer.

The British troops crowded into the room. The sledge-hammer fist of the giant beat them down. He seized a musket, and wrenching it from a soldier's hand, swung it around him with deadly effect. The enemy tumbled and

fell under its awful sweep. The floor at the giant's feet was piled with struggling men, and slippery with blood. The voice of Kirby Kale was heard above the din of conflict, urging the men on. Rankin fell under a blow. Long Beard fought alone, and inch by inch the foe pressed him back into the room; the tide of battle was slowly but surely turning against him.

The eyes of the great man blazed with an unearthly fire. In the dim light that pervaded the room his tall form and venerable beard rendered him grand and imposing. His very soul seemed inspired with the majesty of strength. He seemed possessed of a charmed life, and within that nimbus of unearthly power the foe disappeared, one by one, bleeding and dying.

But this was not to last long. A soldier succeeded in getting in behind the giant and dealing him a blow upon the head. He staggered forward, and before he could recover his footing half a dozen men were upon him. Thus overpowered, he was borne to the floor and securely bound.

"At last, my venerable Long Beard," said Kirby Kale, glaring triumphantly down upon the old man.

A look of loathing—unutterable scorn—was the latter's only response, and even from this Kirby Kale involuntarily started back.

Neither one affected ignorance of the other's identity now—they recognized themselves as foes to the death!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WATER SPIRIT'S RETURN.

We will not attempt to describe what followed the capture of Long Beard, Margery and Captain Rankin. They were all bound and carried away to the boats, the woman in a state of total unconsciousness.

Kirby Kale searched the cabin through and through as if for something which he particularly wanted. He ransacked every box, nook and corner in the house. In a small chest in a bedroom he found an infant's clothes and some playthings all carefully folded and laid away. A sigh, then an oath escaped the lips of the ruthless plunderer when his eyes fell upon the infantile garments and trinkets. With set teeth and clenched fists he sat and gazed upon them, his thoughts reverting to the dim past. Then, as a mist gathered in the sinful man's eyes, that hard, wicked look on his face softened; his soul seemed smarting under the remorseless reproaches of a guilty conscience.

Finally he dashed everything aside and with a violent oath strode out of the building. Just across the threshold he stopped, when he saw that his men had all gone to the boats with the dead, wounded and prisoners. Terror seized upon him when he found that he was alone in the gloomy night. He trembled—his teeth chattered and his soul cowered. Then that terrible death-warning, that strange "chirp" rung startlingly upon the air. With a bound the English officer reached the darkness, as a bullet cut through the space where he had stood a moment before.

He ran with all speed, urged on by the phantom of vengeance, down to the boats, where he found the men in a passion of fury over the loss of every oar left on the boats. This loss delayed their retreat all of an hour until oars could be extemporized from boards torn from the outbuildings.

In the mean time Happy Harry was busy. Having stole about, putting in a deadly shot now and then, until he saw that his aid was of no further avail to his friends, he turned, and hurrying down to the boats, removed and concealed every oar.

Then he crept back into the bushes and waited until the soldiers had emerged from the cabin with their captives. Fearing, however, that there might be others in the cabin, he waited several minutes, when, true enough, a man appeared in the doorway. He recognized the form by its outlines as that of Kirby Kale. Raising his rifle, and giving utterance to his warning cry, he fired, with the result already seen.

Satisfied that the house was deserted, he crept up to the door and entered. All around gave evidence of the dreadful struggle; the ruin was complete—that home was indeed desolate. With a heavy heart he turned to go out, when Belshazzar uttered a low growl and crouched in the doorway as if about to spring upon something in the darkness without.

Harry's first thought was that one of the soldiers had returned to the cabin. He glanced out into the night; all was gloom; but a voice from out the darkness came:

"Doggy, will you bite?—here, fellow," it said, in a low, musical tone, tremulous with fear.

"Be still, Belshazzar!" commanded the youth, and his dog rose from his couchant position and turned aside.

Then the darkness seemed to part, and from between the walls of gloom a light appeared—the light of a sweet, angelic face. A young girl of sixteen crossed the threshold and confronted the boy.

In speechless wonder he stood and regarded the maiden, who, running her eyes about the room and seeing its disorder, cried out:

"Oh, where are my friends?"

Harry knew her now—the maiden called Tempy, who had gone to Colonel Miller with Captain Rankin's dispatches.

"I'm sorry—very sorry to say," the lad replied, recovering from his momentary embarrassment, "that the English soldiers took your friends away to their brig."

"Oh, my poor papa! my poor sister!—it will kill them, kill them!" she cried, wringing her little hands in a paroxysm of grief.

"Little woman," said the youth, with rude gallantry, "I believe I know who you are. I heard your sister Margery tell Long Beard that Tempy had gone off with some dispatches to the head-quarters of some colonel, and I guess you're the girl, are you not?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Well, you see, I'm Happy Harry, and am down here with the governor—that's Long Beard. I'm a friend of his, and done all I could to keep them pisen English from capturin' them. But it wasn't no use. They come too many, and bu'stin' the door down, bolted in. But I tell you, miss, a hornet stung a few of them red-coats, as they won't hear another buzz this side of the judgment day. I've been the very edge of despair—a brink of eternity to several of 'em, and I can jist fight for you like a nest of hornits. And that ole dog, Belshazzar, 'll fight for an angel any time; but, as we're not overly safe here, Miss Temple, we'd better get away from here. Them soul-corrupted English are on this island, yit, and are liable to drop in on us at any moment."

"And what became of the young captain—Mr. Rankin, whom I left here?"

"He was taken with the others."

"Taken!—where to?"

"Them English are soldiers, and jist off the Pleiads to the north, they've got a small brig-of-war, and it's to that vessel they'll take your friends."

Tempy's eyes filled with tears, and her slender form shook with deep emotion. Her tears touched Harry's heart, for his lips quivered, he sighed heavily, and, turning aside, he drew his hand across his eyes, and said, in a half-choked voice:

"Come, Temple, we'd better git out of here into the night, afore them varmints find you're here, or all creation will be overturned to git you."

"I have friends near here," Tempy replied. "We heard firing in the vicinity of the house as we approached the island, and as I was acquainted with every foot of the ground, I insisted on their allowing me to creep up and see what was the matter, for fear of some trap."

"Who are your friends?"

"An escort of soldiers under Lieutenant Reeder, of Colonel Miller's command."

"The great hoppin' hornits! you don't say? Why, I'm jist at home with them fellers, Temple, I am, for a munificent fact. I know every mother's boy of 'em better'n a book. Just lead the way to whar they be; I want to grapple with 'em."

Tempy led the way from the cabin, along a dim path through the undergrowth—down to the beach where seven men, in the uniform of United States soldiers, were waiting.

"My friends are all taken captives," sobbed Tempy, as they approached the men.

"Indeed! It is too bad, but I see you are not alone," said one of the men, whose voice Happy Harry recognized as that of Lieutenant Philip Reeder.

"No, sir, she's not alone, Lieutenant Reeder," the youth answered, stepping forward.

"Happy Harry, the Wild Boy!" exclaimed the soldiers.

Lieutenant Reeder grasped the youth's hand, and shaking it warmly, asked:

"What's the trouble here, Harry? Have the English got this far down?"

"You mean this fur up, don't you?—up from Satan's dominions?"

"Well, have it as you please, but what's the trouble?"

Harry narrated all that had transpired on the island during the night. The soldiers, completely astonished by his story, knew not what course to pursue, so turned to Harry for suggestion.

"Hornits!" exclaimed the youth, "if my say'd do the work, I'd say exterminate the Englishers and Indians, overrun Canada, and take possession of the province and run it in our own private interests. But, as we're only a few, we'd better do the best we can."

"Well, what can we do? that's the question."

"Let me see," said the boy, scratching his head, reflectively. "I guess we'd better hide this little angel here on the island, then we'll take to the lake, row down toward the brig, and see what we can do about takin' possession of the institution."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Lieutenant Reeder.

"Thar's nothin' onpossible, Lieutenant Phil. I once heard of a man that surrounded a hull

squad of men and captured 'em. Why, it's nothin' after you git used to it once. When you git to be an ole veteran like me, you'll buckle right up and attack a cannon, and if it arn't loaded you may carry the works. And so it is with the brig; if we'll spruce right up to her, we may capture her, providin' her crew is not aboard."

"Oh, certainly; but that is not likely to be."

"It is, lieutenant, likely to be," returned Harry; "you see, the dogged thing war afraid to run down here among the islands and bars without takin' soundin's and so they anchored up thar and sent a boat down here to reconnoiter; but, 'atwixt me and Belshazzar, we managed to extract their boat out from under 'em, and then I talked out of my long-ranged mouth to 'em, when click, click, whang-che-bang went their old muskets into the gloomy night. These sounds made them up at the brig think a battle was goin' on, so down to the islands come another boat-load of English buzzards, and after a while here come another, and so I don't think there were many left at the big boat. All of a score of men came down, and I can't see what more'n that's a-doin' aboard a little affair like that brig. But, say there are five left: I believe we can git in ahead of them as have been here, and 'salt the brig and her crew. I do for a monstrous fact."

"But those that were here may be at the brig ere this."

"Nary brig; they're on this island yit—at the t'other end, huntin' for oars to paddle their old shebangs with. You see, I abstracted the oars from their boats when they were at the cabin raisin' hob, and dog my cats if I didn't forget to put 'em back; and it's caused a bothered delay to 'em sweet-scented royalists. If they git to the boat in the next two hours they'll do well, and so we might try to take the brig in out of the wet; and if we manage things right, we might cabbage a few of the crew. I'll take a little canoe layin' right around there and lead the way to within hailin' distance of the brig, when you can stop, and I'll go on and git aboard the British renegade and find out how many men's aboard of her. If thar's two or three or such a matter, I'll give a whistle, and then you bear proudly down upon us and board the brig."

"That is easier proposed than executed Harry," said Lieutenant Reeder.

"Great hoppin' hornits, yes! in course it is easier to do the talk than the work, lieutenant. But then, we must always lay our plans and work up to 'em. Now, that brig, lieutenant, is not goin' to be fool enough to pull up and run down here and surrender herself to us. No, sir; we've got to go up there and lam thunder outen her crew of red-coats, and in course we've got to get up and buzz. Here's seven of you and one of me, that's eight. Belshazzar I'll leave with Miss Temple. Well, eight is a good force. Every Yankee is ekel to three Britishers; that makes eight times three, which is forty-four—forty-four red-coats that we can whip. Just think of it, Lieutenant Reeder! But then, what's the use talkin'! it's only wastin' time. If you won't go with me, I believe I'll run up alone and try the brig a jolt or two. I've done just as foolish a thing as to attack a man-of-war, and come out top canine, I have for an extended fact. It's all in luck; one can't tell what he can do till he tries. But, what do you say, lieutenant—go or stay?"

Lieutenant Reeder was a soldier, but he had no practical experience in the field, therefore he used more discretion about venturing into unknown dangers than the "old veteran" who has been under fire, as it were. He was slow and cautious—brave, but not venturesome; however, he could not stand still, and hear a boy—a mere child—like Happy Harry, begging for his assistance in an undertaking which he declared he would attempt alone, if not aided. Therefore the officer consented to his proposition, and at once prepared for departure.

Tempy was concealed in a clump of bushes, and Belshazzar left to protect her. She was somewhat reluctant about remaining behind; but when apprised of the danger to which she would be exposed in case she accompanied them, she yielded to her friends' desire—praying that success might crown the expedition and lead to the rescue of her father and sister.

The soldiers at once embarked in their own boat—a six-oared barge, creeping away through the darkness after the indomitable Happy Harry, who, in a small canoe, headed toward the brig-of-war.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"BRIG AHoy!"

ALTHOUGH Lieutenant Reeder's boat was, as stated, provided with three pairs of oars, that were handled by three strong, skillful men, it was scarce able to keep up with the little craft manned by Happy Harry. The darkness was somewhat against the lieutenant's party, but by careful watching they were enabled to keep the Wild Boy in sight. In this manner they traveled nearly a league, when the young borderman dropped alongside their boat, and said:

"Boys, do you see that light off hereaways?"

"Yes," was the general response.

"That's her—that jade of a brig; things appears still, too. In course, they're anchored there with their rags of sail taken in to wait for 'fair weather and fair wind.' But, boys, if we find the sullen-browed rip deserted by all but one or two, she won't be a circumstance to us. And if we git her, we'll weigh anchor, spread skirts and send her promenading over the lake like Julia Fipps racks it off for style down to Cornfield Corner. Now, boys, I'm goin' to pull straight for the English bussy, and if I git aboard without gettin' perforated with a composition of metals kicked from a ten-pound cannon, and find the English lady deserted, or nighly so, I'll whistle Cap'n Kidd smartly, and then you come on down and board her. I'll direct you then, and if we're likely to have a fight, you shell know it in due season. So now hold your tongues and keep yourselves ready to march at the tap of the drum."

The next instant Happy Harry was gone.

The darkness grew more intense. Nothing around could be seen save the occasional flash of a light on board the brig. All was silent but the ripple of the waves circling outward from the wake of Harry's boat.

In dire suspense, Lieutenant Reeder and his men waited the movements of the young adventurer.

Boldly the youth pushed across the water and alongside the brig. A voice bailed him, and he answered.

"Who are you?" demanded the watch on the brig.

"Nobody but a small specimen of a boy," replied Harry, boldly, in his reckless, whimsical way of speaking.

"What are you doing here, then?" again demanded the watch.

"Why, I'm run away from home, and call myself Captain Kidd, and I'm outsailing on the sea. I'm a pirate—that's what I am, come to think; and jigger my buttons if I don't believe I'll board you. Got any treasure?—surrender, or I'll open fire on you!"

"Keep your mouth shut, or I'll put a bullet through your pate!" was the response of a gruff, savage voice, that came from above. It was the captain of the brig who spoke so authoritatively.

"Whew!" whistled Harry, softly, "he's a regular ole blunderin' hurricane. 'Spect he'll knock me baldheaded when I git within his reach, but, blest if I go back without first pacing the deck of this old galavantin' tub. Say, up there," and he spoke in a suppressed tone, "would you have any objections to takin' me aboard?"

Without further parleying, Harry was taken aboard the brig and straightway conducted to the captain's room, which was lit up by the dim rays of a lantern.

The captain was a true type of the English bully, with dark, morose, and savage features. His form was short and stout and clothed in a naval uniform, that lent an additional air to his blustering bravado.

He received Harry with a fierce searching glance, and a disdainful toss of the round, bullet-head, while the lad, hat in one hand and rifle in the other, bowed humbly to the soldier of the sea.

"Humph!" sneered the officer, "a blarsted little Yankee! Who sent you here, sir?"

"Who?" ejaculated Harry, in apparent astonishment; "why, commodore, nobody. I'm a young rover-boy—I'm a pirate—I'm Captain Kidd, I am, for a fact."

"You're a young idiot, that's what you are. Your looks tell me that. But, sir, tell me whether you heard that firing off among the islands awhile ago?"

"I reckon I'm not deaf, 'when I sail, when I sail,'" was the laconic reply.

"Don't you know something about that disturbance over there?"

"Nothin' worth mentionin', commodore," innocently.

"Don't lie to me, boy, or I'll put this blade through your body," said the captain, drawing his sword.

"Great hoppin' hornits, commodore! don't murder me, 'when I sail, when I sail,' for I am speakin' the truth, as far as I possibly can."

"How long has it been since you left the shore?" demanded the captain, still fiercely.

"Several days ago, and I never expect to return again. I do not like the shore, general. It's not the place for a pirate. I like the salt, salty sea, with its howlin' old breakers and waves and treasure. Oh, I'm a bully old pirate, and never goin' home again till I git a shipload of gold. Hurrah for Captain Kidd, the rover of the sea!" and he gave utterance to a shout that might have been heard a mile, and which raised the ire of the British captain to such a pitch, that he seized the youth by the collar and shook him savagely.

"Didn't I tell you to keep still?" he roared.

"And didn't I tell you I was a pirate?"

The officer slapped him in the face. He colored deeply, but in his usual good-natured way replied:

"Great hornits, commodore! you're a rough old salt—rough as a wounded buck. A buck,

general, when he gets wounded, is an awful old butter. I war out huntin' with my dear old god-father, Davy Darrett, when he shot and hurt a lammin' big buck. The animal keeled over for dead, and Davy shouldered arms and marched up to tap the critter's throat; when, what should that buck do but jump up, face Davy, shake his head that way,"—and Harry illustrated the movement by taking off his hat, lowering his head and shaking it fiercely; "then," he continued, "the buck started to'rds Davy this way, and slap he took Davy in the paunch, that way," and with all the force of a young bull, Harry drove his head into the plethoric stomach of the unsuspecting officer who went down like a log, completely breathless.

Quicker than a flash Harry snatched the key from the lock on the door of the room, and running outside, locked the captain in. Hurriedly ascending to the deck, the youth uttered two or three shrill whistles that were immediately answered from out the darkness.

"What does this mean?" asked the watch, approaching Harry.

"It means that I'm Captain Kidd, the pirate, and that I'm master of this brig."

The mate drew his short sword, but, before he could use it, Harry dealt him a blow that laid him prostrate upon the deck.

Five minutes later Lieutenant Reeder and his men were aboard the brig. Before the mate had fully recovered, he was bound and gagged. Then they descended to the captain's quarters, unlocked the door and pushed it open. Like a hurricane the enraged skipper started toward the door in blind fury, but the muzzles of seven American rifles caused him to recoil with surprise and horror. It required but a moment to convince him of the situation, and he sheathed his sword in token of submission. He was at once bound and gagged and locked in the room.

This success suggested a second stroke, and arrangements were made for the reception of Long Beard's captors. Each man took his position to await their arrival. A deathlike stillness settled over the brig. That dim light still hung in the rigging, a guide to those on the dark waters.

Half an hour went by.

Still those eight shadowy forms on deck wait and watch with bated breath. Suddenly the dip of oars breaks upon their ears—the boats are coming!

The Americans nerve themselves for the ordeal. A severe struggle is imminent. Hither and thither, like a dusky shadow, flits Happy Harry, trying to catch a glimpse of the boats.

One of them soon came alongside the brig. The murmur of voices could be distinctly heard below. In a few moments five soldiers ascended from their barge to the brig's deck, with three captives in custody. The guard was conducting its prisoners across deck, when eight forms rose up before and around the English with leveled rifles, and a voice cried out:

"S'render, every mother's brat of you!"

It was the voice of the Wild Boy of the Woods.

The English, so lately flushed with victory, were stricken almost speechless. They saw at a glance that the brig had been captured, and not knowing how many of the enemy were aboard, surrendered without a word.

And Long Beard, Margery and Captain Rankin were free again!

"Harry, Harry, my boy, is this your work?" asked the giant, advancing to his side and laying his hand upon the lad's head.

"Well, not all of it, general. I done some figurin', a bit of fightin', more runnin' and skulkin', and finally came to with my head in the grub basket of this brig's pussey old captain, and I—"

"Sh! hark!" cautioned Reeder, "the other boat is coming."

True enough, the other boat could be heard approaching, and it is quite probable that its crew would have met the fate of the first boat, had it not been for one thing—the first mate succeeded in getting his mouth free, when at the top of his lungs he shouted forth a thunderous warning to his friends.

Lieutenant Reeder sprang forward and demanded the surrender of the party, which was already within hailing distance; but the crew, seeing the trap into which their friends had fallen, resolved to avert a similar fate, and turning their boat, fled away over the water.

This left the brig in the undisputed possession of the Americans, and without a dissenting voice it was declared the prize of Happy Harry.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHERE WAS SHE?

THE captive crew of the "Scout," this being the name of the little brig, was at once securely bound and lodged below deck. Then attention was given to Captain Rankin, who was still suffering severely from his wounds and late captivity. He was placed in comfortable quarters and his wounds attended to with all the surgical skill and tenderness that those around him possessed. The faithful

Margery, although a sufferer herself from the mental tortures and horrors of her late captivity, rendered every kindness in her power to make those around her comfortable.

Long Beard, fortunately, was an old sailor, and made himself at home aboard the brig. To him all now turned for further directions, and he suggested that, as the wind was favorable, they weigh anchor and make for a southern port.

"But, look a-here, general," said Harry, "couldn't you be induced to drop down to your island, and see if all's right there?"

"I care nothing about the island, Harry. When my children are safe, then I may look after our home."

"But, see here, Big Beard, I've news for you," replied the youth; "an angel fluttered down onto that island after you were captured, and she said her name was Temple, and that she was your gal."

"Harry, you're jesting now."

"I can prove it; these soldiers came with her."

"It is so, stranger," affirmed Lieutenant Reeder.

"Then, of course, I will stop at the island for her; but how does it come that she is back so soon?"

"I will tell you," answered Reeder. "Colonel Miller sent me out with eight men to reconnoiter the coast, some fifty miles north of the fort, and fortunately met your daughter. When we made ourselves known, she told us where she was going and for what purpose. I offered to relieve her of the dangerous journey, when she gave up the dispatches, and I sent two men in her boat back to the post with them, while I took her in our boat and brought her back to the island. We landed a few minutes after your capture."

"Thank Heaven! thank Heaven! Then Tempy is safe, too," said the old father, joyfully. "Yes, of course we'll touch the island and take her aboard. Did you leave Tempy alone?"

"Yes," replied Reeder; "we dare not weaken our little force a single man. We thought if we made sure of the brig, all would be well otherwise, and if we failed and were ourselves captured, she would be safe. That's why we left her alone on the island."

"Allow me, lieutenant," said Harry, politely, "to say that Miss Temple are not alone. My dog, Belshazzar, are with her, and you know, general, that that's as much as to say that half a dozen mighty good men guarded her. Bell will fight as long as he's able to wag his tail, and so I think we'll find the young angel all right."

"Then we will move at once."

It required but a few minutes to weigh anchor, hoist sail and put the brig in motion. The giant, assisted by the soldiers, manned the little craft with remarkable skill, and in an hour's time they stood off the island—the home of Long Beard.

A boat was lowered, and Harry and a couple of soldiers were sent ashore for Tempy. They were gone nearly two hours, and when they returned they were accompanied only by the youth's dog, which bore many bloody marks—evidence of a terrible encounter with a terrible foe.

But Tempy—she was not to be found—she was gone from the island!

This news well-nigh crazed the father. He walked the deck and wept tears of bitterest agony. Margery, too, was almost prostrated by the news, while Captain Rankin seemed inwardly suffering the tortures of death. He sprang from his couch, his feeble body stimulated by the sad tidings, and rushed on deck; but this strength was unnatural—the force of excitement, and he soon sunk under a relapse of the most aggravating nature.

"We must never leave here till we know what has become of her, general," Harry said, after discussing the matter.

"No, no, never!" cried the father. "I cannot leave my child, dead or alive, in the hands of the foe!"

"I'm of the opinion that that ornery Kirby Kale and his crew come back to the island after we chased 'em from the brig, and captured her," averred Harry. "It is hardly likely that a pack of red-skins have got off here, though such a thing is possible."

They cast anchor and spent the night off the island, and with the first streaks of early morn Harry and his dog, accompanied by Long Beard, entered a boat and crossed to the island. When the rising sun had dispelled every trace of the eventful night, they began the search.

They went to where Harry had left her, and there found strange tracks in the yielding soil. One was a very small footprint, and had been made with a moccasined foot. This discovery gave Long Beard cause for alarming apprehensions, and further search served to strengthen his fears. They found other moccasin-tracks in abundance, which proved beyond doubt that a band of savages had been upon the island. Carrying their investigations still further, they found a spot that had been the scene of a

deadly conflict. The ground was torn up; there was blood upon the leaves and bushes, and fragments of clothing strewn about.

"There, general, there is the very spot where Belshazzar had his skirmish, and from looks of things they both made the fur fly. Great hoppin' hornets! I'll bet it was lively 'bout the time they spun through that thicket whar ye can see some slices of Injin and clumps of fur stickin' on the bushes. Bell makes a nasty fight—chaws away without any regard for jugular veins and sich machinery. He's a leetle rude and barbarous-like in sich things. He's never had a thorough trainin' on the mode of civilized warfare, therefore he has no choice 'bout doin' up a death for a red-skin. It's my opinion, however, that we'll not find your daughter here, for I think the red varmints have carried her away."

Long Beard groaned in spirit.

"Oh, my poor child! why does God punish me so?" he exclaimed, pressing his throbbing temples.

"You may feel very thankful that the British didn't get her, general. The Indians are ornery bald-faced varmints, but they do most always treat young white gals kindly in their way—especially sich angels as your Temple is. But, thar's no telling what them red-mouthed foreigners'd do."

"I would rather see her die than fall into Kirby Kale's power," groaned the father.

"You know that feller, don't you, Big Beard? you fear his power, don't you?"

"He is a Nemesis to me, Harry."

"A—what?"

"A curse that pursues me, haunts me—the fiend incarnate that made me an exile—a re-cluse—a hunted wretch!"

"Oh, great hornets, Big Beard!" exclaimed Harry, sympathetically; "you and me have met off and on nighly two years. We've been like the needle to the pole to'd each other—right there; and I'm awful sorry to hear this. But, I always thought you'd trouble on your mind; and, general, if Kirby Kale is the cause of that trouble, I can eradicate it as effectually as though Kale had never been born. I'll engage to hoist his hair afore two more moons; I will for a polished fact."

"Do not stain your hands with human blood, Harry, however vile it may be, unless in self-defense or in a just cause."

"Why, wouldn't it be in a just cause to stop Kale's respiration? Ar'n't he in battle-array against our country? Don't he fly the rag of England? while I throw to the breeze the stars and stripes of ole Hail Columbia Yankee Doodle! I'm an American patriot, general—me and Belshazzar are, and for the cause of our kentry we'll fight till the cows come home. No, no, general; I don't see as it would be wrong for me to put Kirby Kale on the list of royal dead, and henceforth I shall keep an eye open for that foreign Johnny jump-up. But then, we must look further for your Temple—not give up till we know she is gone."

"Yes; let us look further. We may find her dead," said the white-bearded man, sadly.

They moved on, searching every step of ground for some evidence of the girl's fate. Carefully they approached the cabin and entered it. It had been plundered of everything worth carrying away, and an attempt had been made to fire the building. They also found that the giant's sail-boat was gone, which left no doubt in their minds but that the enemy had all disappeared from the vicinity, carrying the captive with them.

Happy Harry climbed to the top of the tallest tree on the island, and from this point he could command a tolerable view of the whole group of islands that dotted the lake. The first thing that caught his eyes was a thin column of white smoke rising above the tree-tops on an island a mile or more north of them.

"I see a smoke, general," he exclaimed, "over there on the furthest island."

"Indeed! what does it imply?"

"Well, it's not the smoke of a recent camp-fire, that's plain to be seen. The red varmints that got your gal might have spent the night there and left a smoldering camp-fire, or else Kirby Kale, after turnin' tail on the 'Scout,' might have dropped in there to wait for daylight. I'll bet it's one or t'other, and maybe both. If they are there yet, they will be apt to stay there till night; they'll not venture out as long as the brig, now an American fish, swims around in this vicinity. So I'll keep a watch here, and if I see any change in the color and volume of that smoke about noon or after, I'll know the fire's been replenished, and then as soon as convenient, I'll figure off in that direction. And now, general, I'd suggest, in order to throw them varmints off their guard, if they are watchin' the 'Scout,' that you return to the boat and run south eight or ten leagues, and return durin' the night. That'll give me more chances to figure."

"Harry, my brave boy, I will do as you suggest. I have implicit faith in you and your knowledge of frontier life and skill in circumventing the enemy, therefore I will go at once to the brig."

"Good-by, general."

"Good-by, and may God bless you."

The giant turned and moved away, leaving the brave little fellow and his faithful dog alone upon the island.

CHAPTER XX.

THE JEALOUS PRINCESS.

We will now go back and look after Tempy, whom we left on the island, with no one but Harry's faithful dog to keep her company. It was with no little reluctance that she consented to remain behind, but she knew that both Harry and Lieutenant Reeder acted in the best of faith in leaving her there; so the peerless little maiden was concealed in a clump of branching oaks, Belshazzar at her side. She soon made friendship with the dog by kind words and gentle caresses. He crouched at her feet as if assuming the guardianship of her safety.

Tempy sat down upon the gnarled root of the oak and leaned her head against the tree. She was tired—almost exhausted. The day's journey and the night's perils had been more than her feeble strength could withstand without wearing upon her. Her physical strength was not equal to her courage. Moreover, she was laboring under a terrible suspense—she was troubled about the fate of her father and sister. Nor was this all that weighed upon her. The face of Captain Rankin, pale and wan, yet handsome in its manly beauty, haunted her young heart like the vision of a dream, and some aching, longing desire filled her breast. She wept over the fate of her friends, but when her thoughts reverted to the young captain, she choked down emotions that she had never before experienced. Young as she was, love had fettered her innocent, guileless heart, though she was scarcely aware of the fact.

She sat thinking, taking no note of time, nor dreaming of danger, until the dog at her feet started with a low growl. She listened with bated breath. She heard a faint rustle of the bushes near.

The dog growled again.

"Pale-face, pale-face!" suddenly called a soft, feminine voice, evidently that of an Indian, speaking English.

Tempy's heart ceased almost to beat, and it was some moments before she could recover sufficient to reply.

"Who calls?" she finally made out to ask.

"Me—your friend Eeleelah, the Indian girl, the princess of the Ottawas."

"What seeks Eeleelah?" returned Tempy, with an air of relief.

"Her white sister."

"Then come nearer, and tell me why you seek me."

"But your dog growls fierce—he bite Eeleelah."

Tempy spoke to Belshazzar, and he at once became quiet, when, with that characteristic precaution of her race, the Indian maiden crept softly and shyly toward Tempy. As she came nearer, the white girl asked:

"How did the princess know I was here?" She spoke familiarly of the Indian girl, for she was not unknown at the island home.

"I saw you come here in the boat of the Long Knives. I followed you."

"Ah! then it was your boat we saw following us like a tiny speck on the water? But why have you followed me here?"

"Why does the bird seek its mate in the woods?"

"Because it loves the one it seeks, I would think."

"That is why Eeleelah is here."

"Then I am the one sought?"

"No, it is the master of that dog," interrupted the princess; "but I would rather find you now than him," and her voice lowered to a strange whisper.

"I welcome my red sister; I am in trouble. The English have robbed my home."

"That is not as bad as to rob one's heart."

Tempy was surprised at this reply. She knew there was a hidden meaning in the words, but she could not imagine what it could be.

"I do not understand you, Eeleelah," she said.

"My white sister's tongue is crooked, like all the pale-faces but the Wild Boy's. Why is that dog here?"

"His master left him to protect me."

"Then the Wild Boy loves you?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"My white sister knows—she has won his heart—stole it away from Eeleelah," and her voice was tinged with bitter sadness.

Tempy now divined what the girl was aiming at—that a feeling of jealousy rankled in her young heart like a poisoned shaft.

"Eeleelah is mistaken," she said. "I do not love the white boy. I never met him till since the night set in."

"That is long enough to learn to love. Three suns ago a bad white man struck Eeleelah down in the woods because she would not love him. He covered her with leaves and brush where the shadows were deep. He thought the eye of the Great Spirit would not find her there. But he sent the Wild Boy that

way, and his dog scented the blood where Eeleelah fell, and led his master to where she lay with a cloud on her brain. But he soon drove it away as the sun in his eyes shone down into Eeleelah's heart and made her love him. And now her white sister would steal that love away."

"I would not, Eeleelah, stand between you and the Wild Boy of the Woods."

"But do you not wait his coming here?"

"I do," replied Tempy.

"You will never see him here," the princess said. Then she began murmuring, as if to herself, growing louder and louder until she broke into a plaintive chant. This she kept up for several moments, to the surprise and terror of Tempy. When she had ceased, footsteps were heard approaching through the undergrowth.

Belshazzar started up and growled fiercely. Tempy shrunk back and turned to flee, but Eeleelah seized her by the arm and held her fast.

"What do you mean, Eeleelah?" the maiden cried; "release me!"

Eeleelah made no answer. The crashing in the undergrowth came nearer; friends of the princess were approaching. Belshazzar dashed forward and became engaged in a terrible encounter with a savage. Others came on and seized the now terrified Tempy. They were all Ottawas, friends of the jealous Eeleelah.

Tempy shrieked for help, but no friendly ear save that of Belshazzar heard her. Already the dog had seized an Ottawa by the throat, and together they rolled upon the earth. The contest would have been of short duration between the animal and warrior had not others come to the assistance of their dying friend. Two of them threw themselves upon the dog, and in deadly contest whirled and crashed through the undergrowth in rapid evolutions. The struggle had lasted for some moments when the dog managed to elude the grasp of his enemies and escaped in the darkness, as if conscious of his inability to cope with such overwhelming numbers.

Tempy was carried away across the island. Stopping at the cabin, the savages plundered it of everything that would be of use to them. Then they fired the building and hurried to their boats, expecting to be far away ere the blazing cabin lit up the surrounding gloom. To their disappointment, however, the fire went out, and surmising that it had been extinguished by enemies who were upon the island, they pushed westward among the islands.

Tempy sat in the boat, weeping bitterly. So suddenly had the blow fallen upon her that she could scarcely realize the terrible truth. To Eeleelah she attributed all her trouble. The girl's jealousy had made her treacherous and merciless. She would listen to no reason nor truth from the lips of the innocent girl.

The Indians were all young warriors, and seemed not only willing but anxious to obey the mandates of the fair princess. By her direction they paddled along through the islands, and finally landed upon one of the largest of the group—for what purpose we shall see.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHO SHOT HARRY?

It required but a few minutes for the savages to effect a landing, remove their booty and fair little captive ashore and teach their boat. This done, they advanced to the interior of the island, and selecting a little opening in the dense woods, went into camp. Out of the bed-clothing taken from Tempy's home, a kind of a lodge was constructed for the captive, and Eeleelah, with every sense sharpened by her burning jealousy, constituted herself watch over the prisoner's apartment.

In the heart of the forest, where no breath of air stirred, gnats and musketoes and insect-life of annoying nature, gathered in swarms and harassed the warriors until it became necessary to strike a fire or smudge to drive the pestiferous insects away. Surrounded on all sides, as they were, by dense vegetation, the warriors had no fear of the light betraying them. The usual precautions, however, were not neglected. Guards were posted at points where enemies were most likely to approach, and after a short deliberation over their pipes, most of the band stretched themselves upon the ground and slept. The sentinels were relieved at intervals, so that each performed his share of duty and received his share of rest. There was but one in the party whose eyes were not closed that night—Eeleelah, the princess. She would not be relieved of her watch over Tempy, but sat the whole night through, bolt upright, a living statue of patience and unyielding determination, watching her captive rival as she tossed and moaned in a troubled sleep.

Thus the night wore away.

With the first streaks of dawn every savage was astir. By permission of her relentless guard, Tempy was conducted down to the water's edge, where she made a thorough ablution, which proved quite refreshing to both mind and body.

While here alone, she said to Eeleelah:

"What are you going to do with me, Eeleelah?"

"Take you to the village of the Ottawas."

"Why will you not let me go to my people?"

"Where are your people? where is your home?"

"I know not," Tempy responded, bursting into tears.

"Oh, Eeleelah!" she finally cried, "I know why you keep me a close prisoner. You love the Wild Boy of the Woods, and think I do also—that I stand between you and him. Be at once undeceived, Eeleelah; I love another—not Happy Harry—and if you would win and hold his love, take me to my people. He will search for me, and if he finds me the captive of Eeleelah's people, he will hate her. I know the pale-face heart."

"Does the pale-face speak the truth?" she asked.

"I call the Great Spirit to bear witness to what I have said being true," replied Tempy.

"My pale face sister should have told me this before—when we stood alone upon the island beneath the shadows of last night; then Eeleelah's heart would not have grown so hard, and she would not have called the warriors that were near."

"Eeleelah's ears were deaf last night with her feelings of revenge, and she would not hear me. But then, it is not too late to free me yet, and then the princess can seek her lover, and I mine."

"The young chief, Gray Fox, is your lover now," Eeleelah said, affecting regret. "It is too late to free my white sister, for she has become entwined in the heart of the young chief. He will make her his wife when he returns from the war-path."

At this juncture a warrior appeared and requested the immediate return of the maidens to camp, with which request they at once complied.

A fire had been lighted, and a number of wild pigeons, procured in the woods, had been dressed and roasted for their meal. Tempy did not refuse to eat, for the roasted birds were too tempting to her hunger. She ate with relish, and the tender food gave her new strength and new hope.

Since their interview by the water, she noticed that Eeleelah had become somewhat downcast and thoughtful. Tempy's words had painfully impressed her.

Breakfast dispatched, all but five or six warriors entered their boat and pushed off among the islands, evidently on some expedition.

Tempy was consigned to her lodge, and a warrior detailed as guard, for the princess seemed to have lost all desire to perform that duty further.

The day wore slowly on; it was past noon, when the faint report of a rifle on an adjacent island enlisted the attention of the red-skins. As it was not repeated, however, no serious apprehensions arose, and all relapsed into their wonted silence and patient waiting for the return of the expedition.

The afternoon had worn nearly away when the patter of feet suddenly started the encampment. To the surprise of all, a large dog bounded into their midst. It was Belshazzar, the dumb companion of Happy Harry. He stopped, and looking imploringly up into the savages' faces, uttered a low bark, wagged his tail, then, turning, bounded away again into the woods.

The red-skins were awe-stricken by this unexpected movement of the great mastiff. Eeleelah uttered a little cry of surprise, and rose to her feet. For a moment she gazed after the fleeing dog, then started to follow him. But she had scarcely taken a dozen steps ere the dog again appeared in sight. He was walking backward and appeared to be dragging something that taxed his power to its utmost extent.

In an instant every savage was on foot. Eeleelah, who was nearest the dog, suddenly uttered a cry, that was repeated time and again until it was prolonged into a piercing shriek. She recognized the object that the dog was dragging. It was a lifeless human body. It was the body of Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods! He was covered with blood. His hair was all soaked and draggled. His face was covered almost beyond recognition with dirt and gore. His clothing was tattered and torn and thoroughly saturated with blood.

His dumb friend had seized him by one leg, and in this manner dragged him along the rough ground, through the brush, into the very heart of the Indian camp!

CHAPTER XXII.

A "BLOODY" TRICK.

THE savages stood gazing in astonishment on the bloody, lifeless form before them.

Eeleelah, the princess, set up a chanting wail that rung in mournful, solemn and weird cadences through the woods.

Belshazzar crouched by his young master's side and howled piteously.

The red-skins had no idea how the youthful pale-face had met his death unless it had been at the hands of their friends. They recalled the fact of having heard a rifle report some

time previous. But his scalp being untouched was evidence that no Indian had slain him.

They speculated some time over the manner of his death, and were about to institute an investigation, but Belshazzar refused to allow them to touch the body.

A young warrior seized his rifle and was about to shoot the dog when Eeleelah interfered. The princess's every wish was their law. To do her bidding the young warriors seemed to vie with each other. She was the flower of the tribe, whose love every warrior strove to win.

By her orders a blanket was thrown over the body, and then she sat down by it and began chanting a sad and mournful requiem to which Belshazzar lent the deep bass of his voice.

Tempy looked out upon the scene, and her own heart grew almost hopeless at sight of the bloody face of the boy scout lying before her. She turned away, sat down and wept bitterly.

The warriors became very anxious about the manner of Harry's death and set off to follow the track where he had been dragged along. They followed it some ten rods from camp, or to the point where it appeared the dog had undertaken his laborious work. Even here there was no sign of a struggle, but in the weeds at one side was found the body of a large squirrel. It had been so recently killed that it still retained some animal heat. It had been shot through the head with a small bullet, and its throat had been cut with a knife. Having made this discovery, the warriors exchanged significant glances and started back toward camp as fast as they could run.

In the mean time matters had assumed a lively condition at camp: the warriors were scarcely out of sight ere the blanket that covered the body of Happy Harry was thrown aside and the supposed dead boy rose to a sitting posture and gazed around him, one of the most doleful and distressed looking creatures imaginable. His dirty, bloody face wreathed in a smile, his blue eyes sparkling and his hair hanging down in wet, draggled locks over his face—all conspired to give him a look that would have provoked any one into laughter.

"Great hornits!" he exclaimed. "Munificent Moses! what's all this yowlin' about? A dead man can't rest in peace—hope it isn't ole Gabriel's trumpet that Parson Peas used to spout about. Mortal ages! whar be I?"

Eeleelah started back aghast and Tempy rushed from her prison-lodge.

"Harkee! not a word above a whisper," commanded the youth, springing to his feet; "I'm here to save you, little Temple. I am, for a fact. Now come on; follow me as fast as you can."

"Will you not go along, Eeleelah?" asked Tempy, as she walked by the princess.

The terrified look on Eeleelah's face softened.

"I am not wanted!" she replied.

"If you are friendly to us, come along," said Harry, "and we'll talk on the run."

The three at once set off—going directly north.

"How came you in this predicament Tempy?" Harry asked.

Tempy explained all, even to Eeleelah's jealousy.

Harry smiled and said to the princess:

"I am glad to know you are a friend to me, Eeleelah, for I did do you a good turn once, and now if you would do the fair thing by me you will promise to see that your white sister gets safe back to her friends. I am not quite done with this island yet, so now let Eeleelah prove that she is my dear friend by taking her white sister in yonder canoe to the big boat lying toward the rising sun."

"Eeleelah will prove that she is true."

They approached the shore where a light canoe was beached. Harry at once launched the craft. The two maidens entered. Eeleelah took the paddle and drove the canoe out into the water, across the channel, and sought shelter behind an adjacent island—a movement made by Harry's direction in order that the savages might not see which course they took.

A yell in the vicinity of the camp told Harry that his trick had been discovered, and warned him of danger. With Belshazzar at his heels, he crept away through the undergrowth and finally secreted himself—to await the movements of the red-skins—in a thicket where he had left his rifle and accouterments an hour previous.

"Great hornits, Belshazzar," he said aloud to his dumb companion, "I feel awful squamish with these 'ere dirty duds on me. That poor squirrel wasn't born for nothin'; besides, I'll bet 'em red vagrants will find it and gobble it right down, hide and hair, tooth and nails—not the blood, though—we got that. You did your part well, Belshazzar—you done it proper right, you did, for a noble fact. Glad I am that you didn't let the 'arnal corruscated sinners feel my pulse, for I'll swan it beat hard enough to bust the buttons off my sleeves when I laid there. And my heart! why, great hornits! it jist got and pounded a jubilee, it did, for a fact. And gracious me! when they throwed a blanket

over me, I'll swear I thought I'd bust wide open, I wanted to laff so. But, Bel, if it hadn't been for the princess you'd 'a' been shot deader 'n a nit. She done the square thing by you. Our luck has been good lately—we always come out top canines in a fight. But, gracious Peter! what yowlin' and yelpin' as that princess done! she's sweet on us, old dog, she is for a lovin' fact. If she wasn't an Injin she'd not be such an all-killing ugly gal. But that blood—that'll show itself on all occasions. You can't tame a full-blooded Injin more'n you can fly to Guinea. Why, jist see about the Scroggins family. They took a young pup Injin boy to raise, and fed him up well till he got to ten years old, when he turned in one day and skulped the whole family, burnt up the house, stole the best boss in the neighborhood, and sought the land of his forefathers and soon become a mighty chief. Now that's Injin, Belshazzar, it is, for a pizen fact. But then an Injin has some honor, after all, and if that little Eeleelah'll jist do as she agreed to and take Temple to the brig-of-war, I'll think a mortal sight of her and embrace every opportunity to speak a good word for you—whist! there goes one of the red posies—a sweet-scented touch-me-not! and he's on mine and the girl's trail, he is for a fact."

The youth straightened himself up and uttered a sound that seemed to come from beyond the red-skin. The wary foe listened intently for a moment, then bent his course and glided away in the direction from whence the sound emanated.

"Now," said Harry, in a low tone, as if his dumb companion could comprehend what he said, "bear me witness, ole friend, that I am not the most bloodthirsty Yankee boy livin'. I could 'a' shot that red-skin dead if I'd 'a' wanted to. But then one gets tired of blood, they do, for an eternal fact. I've see'd enough of it the past two weeks to float the biggest war-vessel on the sea. If it is necessary, why, I'll shoot; but then it don't do much good to kill a red skin. It's like killin' a muskeeter—two will come to see the spot where he fell, and sip from the hole already bored by his dead friend. And so the thing wags; salt one and two 'll come to avenge him. But there is one thing we must do, Bel, and that's to see whether Capting Kirby Kale is on this island. We don't want to foolish with him, for he's a regular ole devil-catcher. I know it, and am s'prised to see dear ole Long Beard afeard of him. But never mind; we'll spring a leak in his hide if we ever get half a chance, we will, for a gospel fact."

With all the caution that the boy could master, he crept softly away through the lusher toward the camp. He soon came to where he could command a full view of it, and saw three or four savages deliberating over something that was occasionally emphasized by violent gestures. The youth was satisfied that he was the subject of their conversation, and convinced of it beyond a doubt when he saw one of them hold up the dead squirrel from which he had procured the blood to cover his face and hands. A smile passed over his roguish countenance, for he saw they had detected his trick.

In the course of two or three minutes several scouts made their appearance in camp with a look that implied dissatisfaction. In a few minutes more the chief of the party, Gray Fox, and those who had accompanied him, returned from his expedition among the adjacent islands to learn of the trickery of the pale face boy and the loss of the fair captive, as well as absence of Eeleelah.

Captain Kirby Kale came to the island with the chief.

The impression prevailed that Happy Harry had taken Eeleelah a captive, and when the whole matter concerning the coming of the supposed dead youth and subsequent release of Tempy was narrated, it suddenly occurred to Kale's mind that he had seen a canoe, with two or three occupants, pass around the adjacent northern island, a few minutes before he had met the chief's party. They were so far away that he could not make out who the persons were, but naturally supposing they were some of Gray Fox's braves, he did not give the matter a second thought after the canoe had passed from view. Now he was satisfied that the canoe contained the fugitives and the missing princess, and so a boat was immediately dispatched in pursuit.

Harry knew what it all meant, but felt satisfied that the maidens were beyond danger of being overtaken, and so he lingered in the woods, his eyes upon Kirby Kale, and his fingers upon the trigger of his rifle. He sought the villain's life in behalf of Long Beard, and yet there was that natural fear and dread attending the taking of human life that caused him to hesitate. He could not deliberately shoot a white man down without justification, and in entertaining these conscientious scruples he lost the opportunity of ridding Long Beard of his foe, for Kale turned and moved away, followed by the savages.

The red-skins left all their plunder in camp, evidently with the intention of returning soon. But no sooner were they out of sight than the fearless young scout crept out of his conceal-

ment, and entering the camp, heaped every combustible article in it upon the smouldering fire. Quilts, blankets, feather-beds and clothing, plundered from Long Beard's cabin, were piled in one promiscuous heap upon the red coals. A huge volume of dense smoke at once began to roll up among the trees, and scatter in the wind over the island. The fetid, stifling smell of burning wool and feathers filled the air. It reached the keen olfactory nerves of the red-skins, and brought them flying back to camp to find their stolen chattels and goods all aflame, and the incendiary gone. Search was at once instituted for him, but of course in vain.

Believing that he had done all the mischief he possibly could to the red-skins, Happy Harry resolved to quit the island and strike out for the brig. So he crept around to where the enemy had beached their canoes, and selecting the lightest one embarked therein. The island nearest to the one just left laid off to the south, and so he made for that with all his might. It was out of his course, it is true, but he wished to get in behind the nearest island, and endeavor to keep it between him and the enemy. He soon reached the island, and passed around it, as he believed, unobserved; but, to his surprise and horror, he suddenly discovered the savages in a six-oared barge coming round the island from the other direction directly toward him.

The youth was almost horror-stricken. He scarcely knew what he could do, and, for a moment, held the paddle motionless. But no time was to be lost. The savages were not over forty rods away, and were skimming along at a rapid pace. In his flurry and excitement, Harry laid down his paddle and took up his rifle, but a second thought convinced him that to fire upon the red-skins would only add new dangers to his already perilous state. So he laid the rifle aside, and taking up the paddle again pulled for the lake.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WILLIAM MUCKLEWEE TAKES A BATH.

MEANWHILE where were Eeleelah and Tempy? and had the princess been true to her promise to Harry? She had shown what she could do as an enemy and rival, now let us see what she could do as a friend.

Eeleelah was skillful in the use of the paddle, and sent the canoe gliding swiftly through the water. She labored with all her strength to put an island between them and her red friends, and when she had finally accomplished this successfully, she permitted the canoe to come to a stand that she might gain a moment's rest. Her address and demeanor had assumed a different phase toward Tempy. The cold, relentless look of a jealous captor had vanished. Her speech was softer, and tempered with the kindness of a friend and protector. Her whole soul seemed set upon the accomplishment of the mission intrusted to her by Happy Harry. Her wild eyes roamed restlessly around like those of a startled fawn. She was ever on the alert for danger, or rather that which would defeat her escape to the brig-of-war.

Resuming the paddle, she pushed cautiously around the island, and was nearing the eastern side, when she suddenly discovered a succession of waves circling outward from behind the island. She felt satisfied that they were made by some moving object, and fearing it might be made by a party of her friends in pursuit, she turned the canoe in toward the island.

Along the shore at this point grew a fringe of dense, wild rice plants. It grew out in the water, and was in places five feet high, making an admirable place of concealment; and into this miniature wilderness the princess drove her canoe. When unable to use the paddle on account of the stalks, she pulled the canoe forward by means of the plants, but so carefully replaced every stalk that the boat left no trail, and when some ten feet in from the open water they came to a halt.

The plants with their loaded heads hung over and around them so densely that they were completely screened from view on all sides. They were blended with the shadows, and at the same time could command a partial view of the open lake, looking through the sieve-like openings among the stalks.

Both of the fugitives listened with bated breath for the approach of the unknown boat, but not a sound save the wave-like rustle of the reeds could be heard for some length of time. Finally, however, they heard a crashing sound among the plants before them—a sound like that which their own canoe made when they entered the rice thicket.

Eeleelah's eyes started wildly; she listened with all the intensity of her soul, her hand raised as if to invoke silence, her lips parted as if to speak, and her whole form bent slightly forward and trembling with the intensity of anxiety, like one of the graceful reeds around her.

"What is it, Eeleelah?" asked Tempy, in a whisper.

"Danger! danger!" returned the princess.

The noise grew louder, which made it evident that the canoe was approaching.

Eeleelah gazed wildly around her, not know-

ing what to do to avert discovery. The canoe was creeping closer and closer—now so close that they could make out that it contained red-skins.

With dilated eyes and quivering lips the girls sat motionless, watching and listening.

And still the boat creeps on—now so close that they can hear a sudden exclamation from the lips of a warrior, who has discovered something!

Eeleelah's heart almost ceased to beat. She realized the situation more fully than Tempy did. She listened—she heard an exclamation pass from lip to lip of those in the approaching canoe. There must have been four of the warriors—there were four, for the canoe suddenly crashed past them so close that the plants waving above their heads were disturbed. But singularly enough every warrior's head was turned—he was looking southward and regarding a dense column of smoke rising from the center of the grove in which their camp was located. They seemed to know what it implied, and in the moment of excitement forgot the object of their search and passed on, leaving the maidens behind them.

Eeleelah drew a long breath of relief, and Tempy unfolded her hands that had been clasped over her heart to still its wild throbbing.

The princess waited till the sound of the retreating canoe had died away, then she stood up in the boat and gazed around over the wilderness of rice plants. No sign of life was visible, unless the smoke ascending from the island south might have been considered such.

Tempy saw it, and asked:

"What does it mean, Eeleelah?"

"I do not know. Something is burning. The Wild Boy of the Woods is there yet. He may have set fire to the things taken from your father's cabin."

Tempy sighed sadly, regretfully.

Eeleelah began pulling the canoe along through the swamps, moving gradually outward toward the open lake. They were nearly out of the thicket when the boat touched against something in the water possessed of life. A pair of human hands reached out and seized the gunwales of the canoe. A man in the water, almost to his waist, peered up into their faces with a half-sinister leer. He was a person past forty, with a rough, bearded face, and dressed in a hunter's garb. He carried no weapons except a brace of pistols, the muzzles of which just reached the water.

It was the notorious traitor, Bill Mucklewee. "Gee-glory to heavins!" he exclaimed, as he drew the boat closer to him. "I'm dashed glad you've come along, little folks. I've been standin' here a month, if I've stood a second, I have, by crackey. I jist escaped four dashed or'nary Ingins. They'd 'a' salted me right down if they had beheld me—say, can't I ride with you, leetle darlin'? I'm dashed near dead—drowned—dissolved, and I know you would not refuse an ole man."

The maidens both regarded this queer specimen of humanity with distrust. His countenance was enough to provoke suspicion in the keen-sighted princess. He was an entire stranger to the girls, and his presence there led them to believe that he was in league with the English and Indians, and had been stationed there for the express purpose of watching for them. Before they could express a permission or refusal to his desire, he threw himself into the canoe with an ease that was remarkable for a man of his age.

The maidens were dumfounded by his boldness, and sat regarding him with silent amazement.

"Thanks for your generosity, gals," he said, with that same leering expression bordering on the grotesque and comical; "now, where in mercy's name will you take me to?"

"We're going to the brig-of-war on the lake," said Tempy.

"What? holy pokers! that English brig-of-war? Dash it to thunder, are you allies of Great Britain? If you be, I'll get out of this boat if I drown."

"The brig is English, but has been captured recently by the Americans."

"Oh, exquisite de-light! it was, eh? Now I breathe easier—a dashed sight superber. I don't like the English. The royal hounds killed my grandfather at the battle of Bunker Hill."

"How came you to be here, stranger?" asked Tempy.

"How?" drawled the man, somewhat surprised by the question; "why, I took a boat and come down here to ruminate among the Pliadees—heard it war a dashed superb place for an ole man. A million Ingins by actual count, gals, big as it may seem, got after me the very second I landed, and so I had to swamp it. Lord! if I've been there a minute, I've been there a month, a roostin' post for lizzards, frogs, serpents, and even a shark a mile long come up the other day and acted as though he wanted to sun himself; but I squirted some amber into his eyes, and then you'd ort to see him hump himself away from me. But, see here, little dusky-face queen, s'pose

you let me take that paddle and do that work. I'm stronger and tougher and a dashed sight uglier than you be. I'll jist push this boat across this water like a streak of lightning across the heavins. I'll do the paddle a dashed sight superber than you ever dreamt of."

Eeleelah gave him the paddle and changed seats with him. He took his position, and with a grand flourish of the blade sent the craft out into the open lake, and then turned it upon the maiden's course!

"The big boat is this way," said Eeleelah, pointing toward the east.

"Yes, I know it is; but we'd better go around this way, for thar's a dashed lot of Ingins 'round that way," and the man paddled on.

Eeleelah glanced toward Tempy, her eyes flashing with a terrible fire, then she turned to Mucklewee again, and reaching carefully forward, lifted both his pistols from his girdle. So vigorously was the villain working, and so quick and easily had the movement of the princess been, that he failed to detect the theft until Eeleelah rose to her feet and cried:

"Stop, pale-face!"

Mucklewee, who sat with his back to both of the girls, turned his head and glanced over his shoulder, to behold two pistols pointed full at his head. The princess held one, and Tempy the other, and the look that flashed in the eyes of the girls, convinced him that they were as determined in their intention as their nerves were steady. He started as though a knife had been thrust into his back, and throwing up his arm as if to protect his face, cried out:

"Oh, Lord, dash it! don't! don't!" and he felt for his pistols.

"Get out, or you will die," Eeleelah said, calmly, yet with a terrible earnestness.

"Why, little un, dash it, what do you mean? Be keerful with 'em 'ere things—they're p'isenous."

"Get out or die," repeated the princess. "You lied to us; you are our enemy, and we know how to shoot. If one miss, the other will not. Get out, for you will die if you stay here."

"Oh!" groined the astonished renegade, and he laid down the paddle and squirmed about as if in agony. He was completely outdone. He saw that the princess was a dangerous person to trifle with, and he was not in a position to seize and disarm her before Tempy, no less resolute and determined in her looks, could fire. In fact, to save his life, he could see no way of escape but to obey the princess's command; so he threw one foot over the side of the boat, and as soon as it touched the water, he said, pleadingly: "Great mortal Redeemer! girls, don't solicit me to drown myself. The lake here is a mile deep if it's an inch, and I can't swim a lick. Dash it, if a feller can't expect mercy from a woman, who on earth 'll he turn to for consolation?"

"Get out—one minute more and I will fire," said the relentless Eeleelah.

The man threw both feet over the side of the boat, and holding on to the gunwale, began lowering himself slowly into the water.

"Don't you see I'm goin' clear under?" he exclaimed, as he sunk inch by inch; "gals, thar's no bottom here. This lake's ten miles deep if it's an inch. But, oh, Lord! never mind, you dashed, relentless creatures! I'll haunt you—you'll see my poor, ole face starin' up from these cold depths at you all your lives. Dash it, I'm sure to drown; I tell you this lake's twenty miles deep if it's an inch—oogh! oogh!"

While thus expostulating upon his apparent fears of drowning, a wicked fire of resentment burned in the villain's eyes. Eeleelah, however, saw it, and divining his purpose to upset the canoe, she rapped him sharply over the knuckles with her pistol, causing him to howl with rage and release his hold at once.

Like a leaden weight he sunk from view, and before he could rise to the surface again, the princess took up the paddle and sent the craft flying over the waters.

When several rods away they glanced back and saw the redoubtable Bill Mucklewee pop up to the surface, spouting water like a wounded whale. As soon as the worthy villain could get his eyes and lungs cleared of the water, he glanced around him, and when he saw the maidens fleeing over the lake several rods away he began cursing and shouting at the top of his voice:

A grim smile lit up the face of Eeleelah, while Tempy regarded the whole with a mingled feeling of fear and delight.

The princess plied the paddle vigorously, and soon they had passed the island and were speeding away toward the brig-of-war. The last glimpse they had of Mucklewee, he was standing in the water to his chin, shaking his fist threateningly toward them, and no doubt hissing forth vile imprecations.

"Really, Eeleelah, you are as true and brave a friend as you were a cold and cruel enemy," Tempy finally said, when their proximity to the brig assured them of safety.

"When Eeleelah promises to be a friend, she can keep her word. She is no coward like the

English soldiers that skulk behind walls and in holes when they fight."

"I will never forget my red sister's kindness in saving me."

"You owe me nothing. I thought you loved the Wild Boy of the Woods, and I led you into trouble. It was my duty to lead you out, and to your—"

"Oh, Eeleelah!" suddenly cried Tempy, as they neared the brig, her eyes sparkling with manifest joy, "I see my dear papa on board the brig! That is he with the long, white beard!"

"I am glad my white sister will soon be safe and happy with her friends," declared the princess.

In ten minutes more they ran alongside the brig, and were taken aboard amid the wildest shouts of joy.

The reunion of Tempy and her friends was most joyous, and among the first to greet her return was Captain Rankin, who, pale and weak, was out walking about on deck.

But in the midst of the joyous meeting, a man suddenly cried out:

"A boat! a boat!"

"Whereaway?" questioned Long Beard.

"Just rounding the island—with one or two occupants. It is bearing this way rapidly—yes, and there comes another boat in pursuit of the first. Look, friend Long Beard."

Long Beard took the glass belonging to the brig, and scanned the two boats closely.

"Ay, by heavens!" burst from his lips, "Happy Harry is in the first boat, and he is being pursued by a number of savages in a six-oared barge. Boys, now is the time to try your hands at the guns. Be quick or Harry will be overtaken!"

The men flew to one of the brig's heavy guns with the alacrity of old gunners, and in a moment later a cloud of smoke puffed from the vessel's side, and a thunderous boom rolled across the waters of Lake St. Clair.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A LUCKY SHOT.

HAPPY HARRY struggled as he never did before to escape the pursuing savages. There was no dodging them on the open water, as he could easily have done in the forest. Two miles or more separated him from the brig, and with the enemy but a short distance behind, he felt certain that nothing but the intervention of Providence could save him from being captured.

He was at home on the water, as well as on the land, and handled the paddle with all skill, but the pursuers had the advantage of him. They were in a six-oared barge that belonged to the brig-of-war—the same one in which Kirby Kale and a portion of the vessel's crew had escaped the trap set for them by the Americans.

The chase became one of fearful interest to both pursuers and pursued. The savages, ever and anon, uttered wild terrific whoops calculated to strike terror to the fugitive's heart and paralyze his efforts. Belshazzar stood up in the rear of his master's boat, and barked fiercely at the pursuing foe. Now and then Harry glanced back over his shoulder to note the proximity of his pursuers, and when he saw how rapidly the distance between them was lessening, his hope deserted him. But his courage never flinched, and he pressed on with all his might and main.

Suddenly he hears a voice yell out:

"Stop! stop! you little wretch, or we will riddle you with bullets."

It was the voice of Kirby Kale, but the youth paid no attention to the peremptory demand. He kept boldly on—his exertions redoubled by the discovery that the villain Kale was one of his pursuers.

The enemy could have slain Harry, but they seemed so confident of capturing him alive that Kale forbore firing upon him. He had use for the boy, hence his desire that he be taken alive.

They finally ran clear of all the islands and stood out in plain view of the little war-vessel. But by this time the enemy were within a few rods of the young borderman, and Kale was screeching at the top of his lungs for him to stop and surrender, accompanying his demand with a threat. But this did not scare him at all. He pushed on until he saw that further efforts were useless, when he dropped his paddle, and rising to his feet, faced the enemy.

The next instant the prow of the swift-moving barge struck the canoe aft with a crash, splitting it almost in two. Both Happy Harry and his dog were precipitated into the water—both sinking from view. The dog soon rose to the surface and struck out for safety, unmolested by the savages, who were on the alert for the appearance of Harry. But, to their wonder and surprise, the youth did not appear. The moments wore away into minutes—the extreme limits for human endurance beneath the water had expired, and still no boy arose to the surface.

The disappointed victors searched the waters far and near, suspecting an attempt to escape by swimming under water and rising some distance away, but nowhere could they see a sign

of the boy. Aside from the waves circling out from the boat, the sea was still and the least object was visible for many rods around. Kale thought it impossible for Harry to have swum beneath the water beyond range of his vision; but to make certain of this, they began moving slowly outward in a circle, searching the water around them carefully. For half an hour they kept this up. Kale shook his head in a puzzled manner. He could not exactly understand the mystery of the lad's disappearance. Even if he had been drowned, the body should have risen to the surface at least three times before sinking for the last time.

The sudden scream of a cannon-ball, followed by the sullen boom of the gun, startled them. They glanced away toward the brig and saw a cloud of smoke rising from her deck.

"By heavens!" cried Kale, "they've opened fire on us from the brig, and it seems there is some one aboard of her who can handle a gun. We've got to get out of this and let that boy go. If he has gone to the bottom of the lake, the probability is that the dispatches he got from the English spy are with him. And then, come to think, he'd be a fool to be packing them around with him, if he has any idea of their value to the American people. But we had better return and help search for the maidens, Eeleelah and the white girl."

"Hoo! Mucky-wee-lee come!" suddenly exclaimed an Ottawa chief.

All looked away behind them, and to their surprise, discovered the invincible Billy Mucklewee coming around the island directly toward them in a small canoe. The man seemed to be exerting his utmost strength with the paddle, for the canoe fairly leaped through the water. The paddle rose and fell like the winnowing of a bird's wing. The water parted in great rolls on either side of the prow of the boat, while a line of frothy ripples marked the course behind for several rods.

"Something's wrong, red-skins," said Kirby Kale; "whenever you see Bill Mucklewee in a hurry, you may know something's up."

They rode leisurely along toward him, and in a few minutes they came to, together.

"What's the matter, Bill?" questioned the officer, "are you running away?"

"Whew!" puffed the renegade, mopping the perspiration from his face with his sleeve—"gi'me—breath, gol—dash—it—thunderation, gi'me breath!" he panted.

"What ails you, man?" asked Kale again.

"Whew—dash it! what are you fellers paddlin' round here—for, like a passel of nincompoops—whew! I found them gals, and if I'd 'a' had help they'd 'a' been in our possession now. But the dashed on hussies yanked out a small shootin' iron each, and thrustin' the p'izen thing under my nose, solicited me to vacate my position in their canoe; and, gentlemen, I vacated in a dashed hurry. You may think me a coward by doin' so, but if you have been married, you know it is nothin' but bravado that'd 'a' kept me in the boat. I have been married, gentlemen, and I'll say right here that my wife has been married three times since we divorced, and every mother's boy of 'em sleeps 'neath the daisies to-day. So you see, I know something 'bout female nacher. When a woman draws a pistol or a broom on you, and observes something 'bout your retiring from her presence, you might as well retire. It's no use whinin'; an argyment in the shape of a pistol in a desperit woman's hand is conclusive, 'specially if she has the opposite side of the question. Dash take a woman, anyhow. They're the most necessary torture and bother that war ever inflicted on mankind. Any man 'd be a dashed sight better off if he'd never seen a woman, and yet the dashed fools will be drawn toward the dod-dashed critters like as if they were a load stone. As for me, gi'me a catamount, or gi'me death."

"Well, where are those girls now?" questioned Kale.

"I dare say they're aboard yonder brig,—both of the dashed critters, red and white—wild-cat and painter."

Kirby Kale uttered a fearful oath.

"A pretty set of fools we're getting to be," he growled, savagely, "to let a boy have defeated us for a week right along. All this trouble—the loss of yon brig, and the escape of these captives are directly owing to that boy. And here we sit like a parcel of fools under the very muzzle of our own cannon in the hands of our enemy, both boy and girl lost."

"What boy you talkin' 'bout bein' lost, cap'n?" asked Mucklewee, a queer light flashing in his wicked eyes; "do you mean that dashed young Happy Harry divil?"

"Yes; we ran afoul of him awhile ago and smashed his canoe; he sprang out into the water and sunk, and to save our souls we can't find him dead or alive."

"Ho! ho! haw!" roared Mucklewee, slapping his knee and shaking his head in a paroxysm of merriment; "oh-ho, Lord dash it! if that arn't the best thing that I ever see'd sence the mule kicked Mrs. Mucklewee into the middle of the followin' week. Can't find that boy? Ho, ho, ho; dash my old picters if that arn't the de-lightfullest joke out! Why, Kirby Kale!

that boy's within arm's ritch of you this holy, sanctified minute. Just look over under the edge of your flaring old barge, and you'll see that owdacious young dare-devil cozily tucked away under there!"

Captain Kale leaned over the edge of the boat and peered under its flaring side; and, to his wonder and surprise, beheld the object of his late search concealed there within half an arm's reach of him. In an instant the whole truth flashed through his mind; when the boy rose to the surface he came up directly under the projecting side of the canoe unseen, and had been there, clinging on like a barnacle, while the savages were paddling around in search of him.

"Oh-ho! my young imp!" hissed Kale, "your cunning and devilry are worthy of a better cause; but, young man, you—"

He did not finish the sentence, for a cannon-ball from the brig came skimming along the surface of the lake and struck the barge a little forward, cutting its end squarely off, and shivering the canoe in which Mucklewee was standing to splinters. One savage was killed outright, and all others in the boats were instantly plunged into the cold water.

No attention was given to Happy Harry, the author of their troubles, but, side by side, all battled the element that threatened their very existence.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GIANT'S STORY.

HAPPY HARRY experienced no difficulty in keeping afloat upon the waves. He seemed as familiar with the waves as with the intricate mazes of the woods. He turned upon his back and appeared to move along as easily as if propelled by the volition of his will rather than by physical exertion.

Mucklewee shouted and spouted as though he were drowning. He called for help at the top of his lungs. Harry laughed at him, his clear, boyish voice pealing forth his enjoyment of the other's predicament.

"Oh, great Lord dash it!" the struggling renegade blubbered, "if I only could get hold of that young boy-devil I'd stain these waters with his blood—I'd squash him to thunder."

"Here I be," cried Harry, as he shot past the struggling villain, and kicked a sheet of water into his face, causing him to gasp for breath.

The man uttered a fearful oath as soon as he got his breath. It was all he could do toward avenging the insult. He had enough to do—in fact, more than he could successfully accomplish, to keep above water.

Happy Harry, however, never considering the possibility of the failure of his strength before he could reach land, amused himself among his struggling enemies in a manner that reminded one of the sparrow fighting the hawks. He glided to and fro among them, now dousing a red-skin's head under water, pulling his scalp-lock, or throwing himself upon a broad, upturned back.

Kirby Kale came in for a share of the youthful Leander's persecutions. Harry took a position in front of the English captain and kicked the water into a perfect foam around him, enveloping the captain's head in a torrent. Kale dared not open his mouth for fear of being strangled; he dare not attempt to seize the youth for fear he would have more than he could manage, and so he could do nothing but turn aside.

Thus matters lasted for some time when a succession of waves began rolling over the swimmers. They came down from the northeast. Harry glanced along the surface of the water, and to his joy and surprise saw the brig "Scout," bearing down upon them. On board he could distinguish the tall form and long, white whiskers of his giant friend, Long Beard.

The youth threw up his hand and shouted. A moment later he saw a boat lowered and six armed men, under Lieutenant Philip Reeder, put out toward him. Kale saw the enemy approaching but neither he nor Mucklewee attempted to get away. Captivity to them was better than drowning.

"Great hoppin' bornits, lieutenant!" exclaimed Harry as the boat approached, "you are jist in time to help us folks out of this predicament. I like cool, moist atmosphere, but there's too much dampness here for me. Thar's friend Mucklewee who seems to be enjoying it hugely, and thar's Cap Kale and a few red Johnny-jump-ups that are playin' around like a school of whales; they are, for a sober fact."

The boat advanced and picked Harry up amid shouts of joy from the lips of the soldiers. Then Kirby Kale, Mucklewee and the savages were also picked up when the boat headed for the brig.

Kale was sullen and morose, as were the Indians also. Mucklewee was cross as a sick bear. His tongue clashed almost incessantly, and he exhausted his vocabulary of anathemas upon the head of Happy Harry, ever and anon rounding off a peroration with a crack of his huge fist in the palm of his other hand.

"Birds' feathers droop when they git wet, don't they, Huckleweed?" replied Harry, with

a smile, "but you'll be in a worse plight than this afore another day. You remember t'other night, when you betrayed a certain young Captain Rankin into savage clutches, and got us all into a slammin' big fight?"

"Curse the fates," growled the renegade. "I felt in hopes you had gone where that cursed Yankee cap'n went to."

"Whar was that, Muck?"

"To the devil," was the laconic reply.

"You're surely mistaken, else he didn't find you at home, for Captain Rankin is aboard yon brig this holy minute; he is, for a straightout fact."

Mucklewee glanced involuntarily toward the vessel, and a perceptible pallor overspread his countenance.

"It's a mortal fact, Huckelberry, and the captain's been whettin' his vengeance for several days, and I don't suppose a hundred men can prevent him from goin' through you like a dose of lead. I hate to see such a noble specimen of manhood demolished just to gratify a selfish vengeance."

"You dod-rotted little hypocrite! you'd like to see me exterminated," replied the renegade, furiously; "you tried to drown me, that I can prove, and I'll have you arrested for premeditated murder."

"I only doused a little water in your face to wash it; but the dirt on it is like the stain on your soul—can't wash it off; has to be burnt off with judgment fire."

Mucklewee fairly shivered at these words, that seemed strangely prophetic; then he ground his teeth and hissed a fearful malediction upon the head of the boy.

A few moments later they ran alongside the brig, and further words between the two enemies—the fight between the sparrow and the hawk—were prevented.

In a few minutes all were aboard the brig, the prisoners being confined in chains along with their confederates captured the previous night.

Happy Harry was rejoiced to meet Tempy aboard the brig, and happily surprised to be greeted by the proud caresses of his dog Belshazzar, who had been picked up by the brig a few minutes previous.

The youth became the recipient of innumerable thanks and commendations from those aboard the boat. To him was owing all their escapes from danger, and their success—in fact, their very lives were owing to him.

To his surprise as well as relief, the lad learned that Eleelah had quitted the brig soon after having seen Tempy safely aboard.

By this time Captain Rankin was able to be about, and spent most of his time on deck. He and Tempy had a long chat alone, and when their interview ended it was with reluctance that they parted. Of course he had said nothing to her of his love. He desired that a longer acquaintance should develop each one's feelings more fully, as well as the general character of each.

And now that all were aboard the brig, Long Beard set sail for the nearest port of safety. The wind being favorable, they ran along rapidly toward the south-west.

Happy Harry moved about deck with his faithful dog at his heels, enjoying the sail and the cool breeze, and watching the foamy waters around the boat.

He was standing aft alone, his eyes bent downward on the seething track of the boat, when Long Beard approached him unseen, and laying his hand upon the lad's shoulder, said:

"My boy, what are you thinking about?"

"Great hornits, g'neral! I'm thinkin' 'bout what a gol-slamin' time we've had the last two weeks. It's been right out of one trouble into another jist as fast as a feller could keep it up. I don't see how we ever got through, unless we were under the especial protection of Heaven."

"We have, without a doubt, Harry," replied the giant, "and we should not forget to return our sincere thanks to our Great Protector. I have been persecuted all my life, and yet I daily receive blessing from on high."

"Yes, Big Beard, I know you have been a persecuted man. I always said so, and you said so too once—the night of the rumpus on the island. And I b'lieve you said you'd tell me all about it some time."

"Yes, I did, Harry; and since you have mistrusted something of the truth, and been such a friend, too, I want you to know for whom you have been running such perilous risks. My real name is Albert Hancourt, Earl of Hancourt, England. I belong to the best families of that country, Harry, and when a young man I loved Lady Emily Grafton, daughter of Lord Grafton, and she loved me. We were betrothed, when a rival came in for her hand, claiming it upon 'matters of State.' His name was Sir Thomas Kalsington. He was a reckless profligate, discarded by all society except his own class. He warned me that if I stood between him and Lady Emily what the consequence would be, and threatened that if I married her he would never cease to visit his persecutions upon me; and well has he kept his word. By one of the most ingenious pieces of chicanery known

to the legal jurisprudence of England, I was disinherited of all my possessions. Then I was arrested for an offense of which I am as innocent as you are, Harry, but the penalty of which was death. By some technicalities in the legal proceedings, delay after delay of the trial ran my arrest into four years imprisonment, during which time my wife, the fair Lady Emily, died of a broken heart. My daughter Margery was then a bright, accomplished girl of seventeen, and Tempy a mere child. And now, what next should the monster Kalsington do but go to Margery with falsehood in his mouth and represent to her that he held a power over the courts that could obtain her father's release on certain conditions—that of relationship with my family. He told her that he loved her, and that if she would marry him he would be empowered, under the laws, to defend her father."

"Margery loved her father and was willing to make any sacrifice for my release, but I would rather have seen her die, and myself executed, than see her wed that man. But, of course, she was shut off from all communication with me, and I knew nothing of what was going on. She married him, and for a year or so he made her believe he was working for my release, when, in fact, he was drawing the chains tighter. But when she found out his deception, she became desperate, and set to work herself to effect my liberty. Enlisting the sympathy of a number of Kalsington's servants, she went to the prison where I was confined, and forcing an entrance, effected my release. That same night we put to sea—Margery, Tempy, and I. We embarked in an open boat, and kept in the course of an American vessel, which Margery ascertained would leave for home on the following morning, in hopes of being picked up by it, and so we were. The crew of the vessel had not learned of my escape, nor the reward offered for my recapture, before leaving port, so we were carried safely over to America. That was three or four years ago, and during our voyage across the sea, we were hailed by a British cruiser which informed the American captain that he wished to search his vessel for British subjects, but the Americans having the pluck to refuse them the privilege of searching their vessel, and being able to stand up to their refusal, the Englishman went on, and we escaped. For some length of time this insult to American vessels continued, I will say, by the way, until it resulted in this very war."

"Well, the English government offered two thousand pounds reward for the arrest of the Earl of Hancourt and his two daughters. The same notice gave a description of us, the time we escaped, and in fact the minutest particulars. But, hidden away here among the lonely Pleiades Islands, we have lived in comparative peace and safety these years of exile. But now the serpent of evil has again entered my Eden."

"Gracious hornits! I b'lieve you, g'neral; and I'll bet I can put my heel on that serpent's head."

"You can, without a doubt."

"I believe Kirby Kale is the snake."

"He is—he is Sir Thomas Kalsington."

"Your persecutor and the husband of Margery?"

"The same, Harry."

"Well, govenir, it will be an easy matter to stop that villain's persecutions. Here's a rope—plenty of good, strong hemp, and there's the brig's yard-arm, that would make a splendid place to hang him to."

"Harry, I want nobody's blood upon my hands. Amid all my long sufferings I have done nothing evil, not even sought to avenge my wrongs, and I want to continue perfectly upright in the sight of God. Kale is a prisoner of war, and I shall turn him over to the American authorities and let them deal with him as they see fit."

"You are a magnanimous enemy, g'neral," replied Harry; "if we'd fall out, I wouldn't be a bit afraid of you. But how does Margery feel toward Kale?"

"She despises him—will not speak to him."

"Good for her, say I. She serves him right. But, g'neral, I drewed a bead on that feller to-day, and why in Sam Hill I didn't fire, I can't tell. I reckon Satan interfered. But if ever I get a good, lawful and justifiable excuse again, I'll shoot or die. I won't consult my conscience, either, I won't, for a stubborn fact."

"I presume he will be paroled or exchanged at once," said Long Beard; "then he will make known my whereabouts. But, as the two nations are at war now, there will be no international relations between them, and so I will seek the protection of the American flag."

"That's it, govenir, exactly—but, great hoppin' hornits!"

"What now?" questioned the giant, surprised at the youth's sudden start.

"Gracious! I'd almost forgot my duty to my country. I have not delivered them dispatches taken from the English spy t'other mornin'; I haven't, for a disgraceful fact, g'neral."

"True enough, Harry, but then you have been busy. Tell Colonel Miller when you see him, why you did not report at once. If nothing further happens us, you will be in plenty time with the dispatches."

"Just as soon as I land, I'm going to reg right out for head-quarters; I am, for a straight fact. Then, g'neral, I'm goin' to join the army. I'm goin' to raise a company of sharpshooters. I won't have but one boy in my company, and he'll be captain, lieutenant and all the privates; and that honored gent will be Happy Harry. It's true I'm without a rifle now—little Brown Chick chirped his last and went under to-day—under the waters of St. Clair. But I'll have another 'ne just as good—I will, for a fact of facts."

Here the conversation ended, and the two separated. Harry was soon after joined by Captain Rankin, who conversed with him some time. The young officer promised to report his heroic deeds to the commandant of that department and recommend that he be given some testimonial of esteem for his bravery.

This promise pleased the youth very much, and seemed to inspire him with renewed courage.

The day wore away, and night came on apace, but long before morning dawn, the brig-of-war dropped anchor in the bay opposite their destination. A boat was sent ashore to report the arrival of the "Scout," and procure assistance in moving the prisoners ashore. In two hours' time the English captives had been lodged inside the garrison, and Long Beard and his daughters provided for among the good people of the place.

The capture of the English soldiers was hailed with joy by the commandant of the garrison, for just that day he had sent Captain Cutts, with ten men, out north to reconnoiter the forest, where a party of English cavalry were reported encamped, and all but one man had been captured. He proposed at once to send a man with a flag of truce to the British headquarters, and open negotiations for the exchange of prisoners.

Long Beard learned this with the deepest regret; he knew that the moment Kirby Kale was a free man again, he would pursue him and his children with the vengeance of death.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TREE-TOP SPY.

No sooner was Happy Harry on land than his wild young spirit began to long for adventure, and he at once made known his intention of departing for Detroit. He was fitted out with a new rifle and suit of buckskin by Captain Rankin, who felt that these gifts in no way compensated the youth for the favors he had bestowed upon him.

Before leaving the settlement, Tempy gave him a plain gold ring as a token of her respect and admiration for him, and the invaluable service that he had rendered her and her family. This gift Harry treasured above all his earthly possessions, for he now felt more deeply his love for the fair girl.

Shortly after sunrise the youth bid farewell to his friends, and started on his long and perilous trip, through a hostile section of the country, for Fort Detroit. He was accompanied only by his faithful dog. He carried the valuable paper, which he had taken from the British spy, sewed into the lining of his moccasin.

Long Beard walked with the youth to the edge of the woods, about a mile from the post, and when they were about to separate, he said:

"Now, Harry, my dear boy, do be careful. Don't trouble the savages or English. Make it a point to avoid them as much as possible."

"Great hoppin' hornits, g'neral," replied the youth, with a smile on his flushed face. "I want to try my new gun on a red-skin the first chance I get, I do for a fact."

"Try it upon a bird or deer."

"Never, g'neral; I prize a bird in the market above a red skin or Britisher, I do for a zoological fact. The birds have been my dearest companions these many years, and not a feather would I harm unless absolutely necessary. But, g'neral, don't give yourself a moment's uneasiness 'bout me. You have trouble enough of your own, and if they exchange Kirby Kale and ole Mucklewee, Lord only knows what will come to you, g'neral. But rest assured I'll take care of Harry, for I'm in my element now. Yes, give me the woods every time; I don't like the water; it's not as solid a footin' as it is on land; besides, there's nothin' to hide behind—no shade, no birds to sing to me, no squirrels to chatter—no nothin', but water below, sky above, and uncertainty all around. No, no, g'neral; give me the woods every time. I never grew tired of that same old song it's been singin' these hundreds and hundreds of years. But, govenir, I must bid you good-by and be off. Time is precious."

"When will you be back, Harry?"

"That bird on yonder limb can answer as well as I. I may be back soon; I may not be back for a year; I may never be back. But no difference, govenir; thar's nobody dependin' on me. I will go by my old home in the woods, the cabin of Davy Darrett; I will take old Davy

with me, for he is a brave old codger and knows every foot of ground along St. Clair. I hope you will git rid of that lower regioner, Kirby Kale, and that you may live a long and happy life yet; I do for a sublime fact."

"Thank you, Harry; thank you."

"Well, good-by, Big Beard," the lad said, extending his hand.

"Good-by, Harry; may God guide and protect you through all the dangers that beset your path."

Tears rolled up into the lad's eyes as he turned away. To prevent an outburst of feeling, he broke into a run and hurried on, never daring to look back until assured he was out of sight of Long Beard; then he slackened his pace to a walk.

"Here we are again, ole dog, alone in the woods," he said, brushing away the mist from his eyes. "It seems kind a-natural, don't it, old friend? The birds, and the squirrels, and the wind whistling among the trees, and the droning around us—great hornits! who says it isn't music, sweet music?"

Presently the youth began his favorite amusement of calling the birds around him through his power of imitation. A robin was the first to answer his call. It perched itself high in a tree-top, but when assured that it had nothing to fear, it descended closer. Then, one by one, came other winged songsters, until nearly a score had gathered around him. They took their position among the branches of the green-robed trees; and as he moved on, they followed him, singing, chattering, and chirruping in concert. Now and then a squirrel frisked out of a gnarled old oak, and regarding the passing youth and his escort of songsters with a look of apparent delight, sent forth a sharp bark that rung clearly through the woods.

And thus for hours the youth journeyed on through the great forest, the birds following—some dropping out of the ranks and others joining. And as he was now approaching the enemy's country, he watched the birds closer and closer. Long association with them had taught him their habits and peculiarities. He knew by their movements whether danger was about or not.

The sun had long since crossed the meridian, and the shadows of evening were gathering. The last bird had deserted the youth, and, instead of the music of the feathered tribe, the hoot of an owl rung upon his ears. This was suddenly followed by the tramp of hooved feet and jingle of military trappings. Armed horsemen were approaching through the woods, but Harry knew not whether they were friends or foes. Belshazzar pricked up his ears and whined uneasily.

"Hist, Bell!" exclaimed the youth in an undertone; "some one's comin'! git away from here—out into the woods, ole dog, for I'm goin' to climb this tree and hide. Away, Bell, away!" and he motioned the dog away toward the south.

The sagacious animal seemed to comprehend, and at once scampered away, and Harry, slinging his rifle at his back by means of a strap attached for that purpose, climbed a huge oak tree with low, far-branching limbs, and ensconced himself among the dense foliage on a bough about ten feet from the main trunk and twice the distance from the ground.

He had scarcely done so, and the foliage around him was still rustling from his movements, when a number of mounted soldiers in the English uniform appeared in sight.

Happy Harry was almost afraid to breathe, for he at once discovered that the soldiers were a squad of the king's cavalry, and the advance guard of an invading army. Of this he was positive, for he could hear, in the distance, the tramp of the army, the rumble of artillery and baggage-wagons, the blows of axes clearing a way through the woods for the teams, the commands of authoritative voices, and the general confusion of sounds incidental to a moving army.

To Harry's surprise and fear the detachment of cavalry drew rein within a few rods of where he was concealed, and the officer in command said:

"We will wait here until the main column comes up. It will require some time to bridge that creek, and so by the time they get across it it will be time to go into camp. This will be a favorable spot for an encampment."

So saying they dismounted, and just about sunset Major-General Brock and staff rode up at the head of the advancing army.

"Have you selected grounds suitable for an encampment, colonel?" demanded Brock of the cavalry officer.

"This spot, general, is the most favorable one convenient," replied the colonel.

"Then here we will halt," replied the general. Harry heard every word, and it almost chilled the blood in his veins.

The army soon came up, and was halted upon the grounds surrounding the tree in which our hero was ensconced. A baggage wagon was drawn up near the huge oak, and a number of tent equipments removed therefrom preparatory to being erected for the accommodation of the officers.

General Brock selected a spot directly under the very limb upon which the boy was perched, and ordered his tent pitched upon it; and as a number of men proceeded to work, Harry's heart almost ceased to beat through fear of detection.

The tent was a large conical structure about ten feet in height at the apex, which reached well up among the limbs. It required but a few minutes to prepare it for occupation, and, thanks to the providential shadows that lurked among the foliage, Harry was not discovered. But he was in for a night there in the tree, and in a position, too, that might prove more than his endurance could bear.

The deeper shadows of night proved a great relief to the boy, and he gradually settled himself into a more comfortable position. The soldiers lighted no fires. They feasted their hunger on cold provisions, and slaked their thirst at the little stream that rippled close by. The low murmur of voices rose on all sides. The animals were hitched here and there to trees and bushes, and given their provender on the ground. The harness and saddles had not been removed for fear of surprise. The whole camp was a continuous stir of mingled life and sounds, and a relief to Harry; for the stamping of hooved feet, the rustling of bushes and the clinking of harness chains served to drown any noise that he might make.

Suddenly a faint ray of light pierced the gloom within a few feet of his face. It came from a small, round hole in the very top of the British commander's tent, and the lad could not resist the temptation to lean slightly forward and peer down through the hole. He saw a lamp burning on a small stand, and before it sat General Brock and two of his officers on camp stools, examining a map that was outspread upon the general's knees. He could see their faces but indistinctly. He could hear the murmur of their voices, but could only make out a word now and then.

At length, however, one of the general's aide-camps appeared at the door of the tent, and said, in a tone quite audible:

"General, pardon my intrusion, but there is an Indian chief at the door desiring an audience with you."

"Of what tribe?" inquired the general, a little crustily at being disturbed.

"Of all tribes, general; it is the great Tecumseh."

The general started as if at a hostile shot. He rose to his feet, and as he folded the map he dismissed the two officers, and then said to the aid:

"Admit the great chief, Tecumseh."

Harry's curiosity now assumed a more eager form. Carefully he dropped from limb to limb until he actually pressed his eye to the little opening to obtain a glimpse of the mighty warrior, as well as to catch the words that passed between him and Brock.

With stately dignity Tecumseh stalked into the presence of the English general, who advanced to meet him with the palms of both hands outward in token of friendship.

They shook hands. Brock welcomed the great warrior, and with his own hands spread a blanket upon the ground for him to be seated upon. When Tecumseh sat down the general sat down upon his camp stool facing him.

Then the chief demurely filled the pipe on the head of his tomahawk, lit it, and having taken a whiff or two, passed it to the general. The latter knew its signification, and followed the chief's example by smoking with Tecumseh the pipe of peace.

Assured of the general's friendship now, the chief said:

"Messengers from the Canada Father told me of your friendship to the red-men." He spoke English fluently, and Harry could hear every word he said.

"I have no cause to entertain other than the kindest feelings toward my red brothers," responded Brock; "they have long been the friends of the English."

"We are friends now because the Yankees are our enemies. The red-men have dug up the hatchet, and are ready to recover the land of their forefathers. The Great Canada Father said to Tecumseh, in a whisper: 'Go, fight the Yankees; strike when the English strike, but tell it not that I thus whispered in my red children's ear. Fight as though you fought independent of the English, for if it should be known that we urged the red-men to fight for us, other nations might execrate us, and send their soldiers and big boats to help the Americans years ago.' When my Canada Father said this, I come to see the chief of the English warriors that I might know when to strike."

"I will be glad to have you co-operate with me," replied the British general, encouraging the great chief in what English history disclaims to be true, "for the Yankees are many and cunning. They cannot stand, however, before the Indian's tomahawk and the English soldiers' muskets. Already the Yankee chief, Governor Hull, has retreated from Canada like a coward. He has gone to Detroit, and there sought his forts as a fox pursued seeks his den. There will I strike him."

"Tecumseh and his braves will be there to fight with his white brothers."

"How far away is your village?"

"Not a half sun's travel."

"Then I can depend upon your assistance at Detroit?"

"Yes, when my white brother is there."

"Then let this be so understood."

"Tecumseh always keeps his word with a friend."

By this time the greatest excitement prevailed in camp. The news had spread like wildfire that the great Tecumseh was a guest at headquarters, and in a very few minutes hundreds of men had gathered around the tent, eager to get a glimpse of the mighty chieftain. But of course not one in twenty could get near the door, and many were compelled to retire to their quarters without having a chance to gratify their curiosity.

One young soldier, however, determined not to leave without seeing the notorious Indian; that faint beam of light shining from the apex of the tent suggested a means, and so he hastily climbed the huge oak under which the tent stood, and began crawling along the very limb upon which Happy Harry was concealed!

And the tree-top spy found himself in a terrible dilemma, from which there appeared no possible chance of escape!

CHAPTER XXVII.

"IN A BOX."

HAPPY HARRY drew back as far as possible to get out of the way of the inquisitive soldier, but he could retreat only a few feet as the limb had been broken and drooped downward at an inclination of forty degrees. This left but one course to pursue, and he quickly made up his mind to adopt it. He drew his pistol, and as the soldier came within reach, dealt him a powerful blow upon the head.

A groan escaped the Englishman's lips, as he tumbled from the limb upon the tent. It so happened that he fell where the selvages of the canvas lapped one over the other, and under his weight they parted and he fell through into the tent, landing squarely on the princely head of the great Tecumseh.

A war-whoop burst from the savage chieftain's lips, and an oath from Brock's. The former sprung to his feet and drew his tomahawk and the latter his sword. But in the confusion consequent upon the unceremonious intrusion of the soldier, the table was tipped over and the lamp upset. The canvas took fire, and in a moment the whole structure was in flames, the general, the chief and the wounded soldier barely escaping.

Up among the foliage of the great oak rose the smoke and flame. The green leaves crackled and crisped in the excessive heat which soon became more than human endurance could withstand. Harry was right over the worst of it. He began sneezing and coughing violently, but owing to the general confusion below, no one heard him. Men crowded and jostled each other eager to get a view of Tecumseh in the glow of the burning tent. The horses near at hand snorted and pawed uneasily. A number of men with bucketfuls of water made their way to the fire and dashed it on the flames. This proved the worst blow of all to Harry. Steam, ashes and smoke whirled up into the foliage so strong and suffocating that he was compelled to leave his perch, and slide down the limb to the ground in the midst of the astonished army!

"Great hor-nits!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes and gasping for breath, "what the 'tarnal nation's up here?—a camp-meetin' goin' on!"

"By heavens! a young Yankee!" exclaimed a soldier.

"Ay, that accounts for Dinwiddie's fall," replied a colonel; "lead the little ferret out and shoot him; the surgeon says Dinwiddie will die."

"Yes, shoot him! shoot him!" cried a hundred voices.

"Order! order!" thundered General Brock. "Have you forgotten, men, that you are soldiers of the English crown? Shame for such conduct; he is but a boy, not the American army!"

This merited rebuke at once restored order, then Brock led the boy into the tent of one of his generals and questioned him regarding his presence there.

The youth talked in such a childish, frivolous manner, the commandant came to the conclusion that he was a little runaway Yankee, who had become imbued with the spirit of some hero of a fireside story, and had rambled forth to seek renown in the great wildwood. Brock did not suspect him of having dealt Dinwiddie the wound upon the head, from which the surgeon feared there was no recovery. All had seen the soldier climb into the tree, but the fact that the boy was there at the time, was no evidence to the general that he—Harry—had dealt the blow. His natural conclusion was that Dinwiddie had received his injuries by his fall. However, as the youngster was in their power, the commandant concluded to retain him, for while he appeared to be not overly stocked with

common sense, he might be thoughtful enough to give the Americans some information that would be of interest to them.

Harry acted as thoughtless and simple before the general as was consistent with his purpose and nature. It was his only recourse to outwit the English, although it was difficult for him to throw the look into his unusually intellectual face that should necessarily correspond with his rambling talk.

He was confined in an ambulance and a guard placed over him. He was not bound, as it was thought that the presence of the guard was all that would be necessary to keep him in his place. The watch took his position in the forward part of the prison-vehicle. He sat down upon the driver's seat with his gun at his side. Harry occupied the rear end of the carriage, and soon after he was placed therein, he began whistling sharply as if calling a dog.

"Shut up that noise or I'll slap you," vociferated his angelic guard. But Harry had accomplished his purpose—he had called up Belshazzar, who came bounding from the woods to the side of the vehicle in which he was confined.

"Let him in, Englisher; poor ole Bell's tired," said Harry to his guard. "He's my friend; he's a bully ole dog, he is for a fact."

"Let him stay where he is," growled the amiable guard, and Harry had to obey.

The dog laid down under the carriage, where he remained the long night through.

The night wore away, and by dawn the next morning the army was astir. Dinwiddie was still unconscious, and the author of his ills had begun to contemplate an effort at escape when a man appeared in camp, the sight of whom drove all hope from the breast of the youth.

The man was the notorious renegade and traitor, Bill Mucklewee!

Bill Mucklewee was conducted to General Brock's quarters, where he was closeted for some time with the commandant. When he appeared again the general was with him. He ran his eyes over the camp where they happened to espy the face and form of Harry. Mucklewee started back as if with terror, exclaiming:

"Great Jehovah! I'll be dashed to thunder!"

"What ails you, Mucklewee?" asked the general.

"Ails me? Why, don't you see that boy? that's him—that imp of all that's mean, and cunning, and sneakin', and devilish!"

"What do you know about him?"

"Well, jist listen! dash my pickers to thunder! What do I know about him? Why, he's the worst enemy the English have got to contend with. He's a reg'lar American spy. It was him—that very little imp of cussedness, that took your dispatches from Major Crafston; and it was him that led the party that captured the brig-of-war Scout, off the Pliadees islands."

"What? is the Scout captured?" asked the general, with a sudden start, for aboard the brig was a large amount of supplies for his army.

"Captured? yes! and that boy right there done it—that very dashed, insignificant little pup of a boy right before your eyes."

"Well, who is this mighty little fellow that's whipping the English navy?" asked Brock, sarcastically.

"Happy Harry, the dashed brat's called—Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods."

"Then, if this is the case, he has been playing a part with my confidence," said Brock; "let him be arrested."

Harry, who was standing near with a grim, defiant smile upon his boyish face, eyed Mucklewee with a look that fairly caused the villain to wince. Belshazzar, squatted upon his haunches, and towering almost as high as his young master, regarded the renegade with a look that told he had not forgotten he was an enemy to his master. When the two men started toward the lad for the purpose of seizing him, the dog showed his teeth and growled.

"Look out, thar, sojers!" Mucklewee shouted; "you want to watch that durned dog. A man's not a bite for the dashed brute; stand aside and I'll put a bullet through him; I owe him a grudge anyhow."

The soldiers parted on either side between the dog and renegade, who took up his old flint-lock musket to examine its priming.

Harry saw that a critical moment was at hand for him and his dumb companion, and not an instant was to be lost. Turning, he threw his slender form upon the dog's back, locked his arms around his neck and his legs around his body, then he spoke a single word to the animal, and like a dart he shot away through the camp, carrying his young master with apparent ease.

So sudden and unexpected had this movement been that the dog with his human burden was fifty yards away before a man spoke. Then Mucklewee up with his musket and blazed away at the boy and dog, but the piece hanging fire, he missed his mark and wounded a valuable horse, whose terrific plunging and cavorting stampeded half the horses in camp. And now arose a tumult, equal almost to that of battle. The cries of the soldiers, the commands of the officers, and the plunging and thundering about of the animals—all created a general confusion

that drew attention from the youth for the time being. But, as soon as quiet had been restored, a number of mounted troops started in pursuit of the Wild Boy.

Having passed the pickets in safety, Harry gained the woods beyond without a scratch, and when assured that he was free from immediate danger, he dismounted from his dog's back.

"Well done, ole dog; well done," said Harry, patting Belshazzar upon the head; "your name should go down to posterity like your namesake of Bible fame, of whom Parson Lott used to spout so much. It's well that you are a big dog, and that I'm a 'little, insignificant pup,' as ole Mucklewee called me. We two together make one purty good man—I furnish the thinkin' apparatus and you the bone and muscle; I git us both into trouble and you git us out."

The dog was warm and panting with his recent violent exercise, and as they had halted near a little stream that crept along under the leaves and grass like a guilty thing, both master and dog slaked their thirst, and then moved on through the woods.

"Yes, by the hoppin' hornits," the lad mused as he moved on; "I understand a thing or two now, I do, for a fact. Ole Tecumseh is goin' to give ole England a boost in this war, and yit England don't want to let on that she's anything to do with the savages, oh, no! She's a mighty civilized country, and don't want it known as the general said, that she's hirin' savage barbarians to butcher and scalp Yankees and burn and tear up hob. Oh, Lord, no; they don't for a fact! But I'll see 'bout that. I'll put a flea in General Hull's deaf ear, and then when that little paper in my moccasins is brought out and discomboborated, I'll bet somebody's calculations 'll be spilt. And, great hornits! that durned ole Mucklewee, how I'd like to be his final settlement, and I will be yit if he don't keep entirely out of my way. Everybody thinks because I'm a boy I've no feelin'. Everybody has a lesson to learn me, and if they don't quit foolin' I'll learn some of them how to shoot; I will, for a bloody fact. But, speakin' of shootin' reminds me of the fact that I'm here in the wilderness without even a knife. I never even got to try my rifle that Cap Rankin give me; but no difference, I'll have another. By hornits! I know where I'll get one—at ole Davy's! His cabin is right on our way. Poor, dear ole Davy, he's been a father to me. For three years I roosted under his roof, and many things have I learnt from him. We'll strike his palace 'bout night, and I reckon we'll be glad of it, too, for we've not a bite to eat nor nothin' to procure it with. Yes, ole Davy Darrett's always got a lot of extra guns, and I'll bet I git an outfit there; I will, for a fact."

The youth quickened his pace and hurried on south. Mile after mile was traversed. The sun crossed the line and sunk slowly westward, and just as the evening shadows were gathering he hove in sight of the cabin of Davy Darrett, the trapper.

The building stood alone in the great wilderness on the bank of a little purling stream. A light smoke was curling from the chimney-top—a huge pile of stone, sticks and mortar. No other sign of life was visible about the place, but Harry pushed boldly on and approaching the door rapped sharply upon it.

"Come in!" bawled out a voice.

It did not sound exactly like that of Davy Darrett's, but whose else could it have been? It had been some time since he had heard Davy's voice, and thought he might have been mistaken in its sounding unnatural, so he opened the door and entered. His dog sprang in ahead of him.

The instant the youth was inside some one standing behind the door banged it shut, and placed himself between it and Harry; while a second person appearing from behind a curtain of blankets suspended from the ceiling to the floor, confronted him with a devilish, triumphant leer upon his face.

This man was the notorious Bill Mucklewee, and the man at Harry's back was a soldier of the king.

Again had the Wild Boy fallen into a trap of the enemy from which there seemed no escape!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CABIN CONFLICT.

HARRY glanced around the room, an inward terror taking possession of him for a moment. A fire was burning on the great stone hearth, and some meat was broiling on a heap of coals. To him it was evident that the men had taken possession of the cabin and were helping themselves. But, where was old Davy? As he asked himself the question his eyes caught sight of a little pool of blood upon the floor. He also saw a track of blood leading from the pool across the floor into one corner where there was a heap of straw and blankets used by the old trapper as a bed. There was a suspicious look about this heap, and as he eyed it closely the blood was almost frozen in his veins by sight of a bloody, moccasined foot protruding from

the pile of blankets. It told a fearful tale; it was Davy's foot without a doubt! Those human fiends had murdered the old trapper and concealed his body there in the corner.

"You needn't stare around here, you dashed young rascal, tryin' to come innocence on me," burst from Mucklewee's lips. "It's me—the veritable ole Billy Mucklewee. You needn't think that you and that durned, ornery, big dog of yours can outwit, outrun, outfight ole Billy. No, sir-ee; I'd an ijee you'd cut out this way, and so I took wings and let out, too. You and your little elephant of a pup 'll not slip me again. You're caged, my son, and you might as well drap your feathers."

"Murderer!" hissed the youth, with all the loathing scorn that he could throw into the words, "you ought to be quartered and fed to the wolves! You have murdered Davy Darrett, a harmless old trapper."

Involuntarily the murderer glanced toward the heap in the corner around which Belshazzar was sniffing inquisitively.

"Nobody 'll miss him," replied the wretch, seeing that the boy had discovered his bloody crime; "and to cut matters short and end this talk, I'll tumble that old dog over by him," and he drew a pistol and cocked it. But, before he could fire, Happy Harry sprang behind the villain, and jumping on his back, clasped his arms around his neck so tightly that he was choked to the floor.

"Take 'em, Bell!" cried the lad, and the next instant the dog sprang upon the soldier.

"Into 'em, Harry!—sick 'em, Belshazzar—give 'em goss—rack it to 'em, the bloody hellyons! Yoo! hurrah, for here's ole Davy good as a dozen dead men yit! Lap it to 'em boys, and I'll lend a helpin' hand—hurrah for 'Hail Columbus!'"

Covered with blood and suffering with a number of severe wounds, old Davy Darrett had sprung from the heap in the corner and hastened to assist his young friend and Belshazzar.

Harry clung to Bill's neck like a monkey to a limb, and the old reprobate failing to dislodge him by rolling upon him, drew his second pistol, and was about to fire back over his shoulders into the boy's face when Davy came to the rescue. He struck the pistol from the villain's hand, and then dealt him a furious kick in the ribs that doubled him up like a twisted limb.

With a howling imprecation Mucklewee strove to spring to his feet, but before he could rise the trapper snatched up the villain's pistol and shot him dead!

Then over the fallen body, Davy Darrett extended his hand, saying:

"Shake, Harry, shake! God bless your blessed little soul; shake, I say!"

"Great hornits, Dave! I thought you were dead," replied the lad, extending his hand.

"I war mortal nigh it, and thought I'd play 'possum like you are in the habit of doing; but, Harry, for God's sake don't let that dog chaw that Englisher any more! The man's deader'n thunder, now. Call him off, Harry, call him off."

Harry called his dog away from the really dead soldier; then, white almost as a sheet, he turned to Davy and said:

"This is awful, awful business, Davy. I almost makes me sick at heart to think men become hunters of men, and butcher and kill one another."

"You're entirely too tender-hearted, Harry, my boy," replied Davy. "I don't see how you get along as well as you do. But then you'll git over this by 'n'by. It's natural for a youngster to have a soft heart. I like to see a soft, kind and gentle heart when the right time comes, but then I want to see it stiffen and brace up when courage and firmness is wanted. You've that kind of a heart, boy; I know you. Brave are you when bravery's required; gentle and kind when gentleness and kindness is wanted. You must git over feeling bad about these two villains unless you're afraid their death will make times dull."

"I've had it lively for the past week, friend Davy," Harry announced, "and I must say that that dead wretch lying there has been the cause of a good share of it all. But, Davy, do you know a regular ole war with England is goin' on now?"

"That tells me so," and he pointed to the dead soldier.

"And do you know that a big army of red-coats have crossed the frontier and are marchin' down this way?"

"Didn't know that, Harry."

"It's true, it is, for a startlin' fact; I camped with 'em last night by their earnest request, enforced with a loaded musket. They'll be here—always about to-morrow noon, and maybe sooner, for I left them fellows at camp."

"Jewhilkins! you don't say, Harry?"

"I do, for a downright fact, Davy. I come by to tell you."

"Come by? whar ye goin'?"

"To general head-quarters of the American army in the North-west, which is at Detroit. I have a message, and the whole plans of the English general's proposed campaign, which I

captured from a British major t'other mornin'."

"You don't say you have these things, do you? Why, if that's so, it'll bust the Britishers' calculations all to smash. Gracious! yes, you want to get that news to Hull, and it'll be the makin' of you. You're a trump, boy, and ort to be made a gineral or a govenir when you grow bigger. I'd walk a thousand miles to vote for you, Harry."

"Davy, are you goin' with me? or will you stay here?"

"Stay here?—stay here and git gobbled by the British? Nary stay; I'll shoulder my old rifle and peg out with you. I've not much here to lose, and everything to gain. Yes, Sir Harry, I'll shoulder rifle and peg out for tall timber with you. I want to take a hand in this war, for I never expect to see another war in my time."

"I will be pleased to have your company, Davy; and I'd suggest that we get away as soon as possible, for other enemies may be near. But, before we go, me and Belshazzar wants something to eat, if you've anything in your palace of the kind. We've fasted for a week, it seems like."

"Anything to eat? Why, just look thar, br'lin' on them coals. My jolly, genial guests put me to bed and then went in on their nervous system. But, ah, me! how very unsartain is life. Now thar they lay, and here I stand. Yes, Harry, we'll have a rousin' old supper, then set sail. Fust, let us drag these poor dead devils aside and cover 'em up; then, while I'm washin' up and puttin' on some clean buckskin, you amuse yourself the best you can."

"I'll select a rifle from among our enemies' effects, as I was relieved of mine at the British camp last night."

"Do so, Harry—go ahead, make yerself right to home—indulge freely, partake of whatever pleaseseth your fancy—be reckless as you please, for this is our last hour, p'raps, at the palace of ole Davy Darrett."

Harry examined the weapons of the soldier and Mucklewee, and, to his happy surprise, found the gun and accouterments that he had been compelled to leave in Brock's camp. Mucklewee had substituted the elegant new rifle for his old flint-lock musket, little dreaming what a short time he was to possess it.

Old Davy soon washed the blood from his person and attired himself in a clean suit of buckskin from head to foot; then he set about preparing supper. This required but a short time, when they sat down and ate heartily.

When the meal had been finished some of the remnants were stowed away in a leather game-bag for future need, then the two took their departure for Detroit, Davy bidding farewell to the cabin as though it were an old time honored friend.

It was dark by this time, at least it seemed so to our friends when they first plunged out into the woods. The wilderness was droning forth its monotonous song; but the sky was clear and starry, and the air cool and fragrant with the odors of the wildwood.

The two had journeyed but a short distance when the whinny of a horse suddenly broke through the woods. They came to a halt and listened. Not far away they could hear a sound, like a horse impatiently pawing the earth, mingled with the clinking of ring-bits and stirrups. Davy pressed his ear to the earth and listened long and intently, but could make out nothing further than the sounds indicated.

"By hornits!" exclaimed Harry, as a thought occurred to him.

"Now what, Harry?" questioned Davy.

"I hadn't thought of that before."

"Of what?"

"Of Mucklewee and the soldier havin' horses concealed near your cabin."

"You don't know yit that such is the case."

"No, but then it's possible. That noise is made by a horse pawing the ground and he must be hitched in there. Come along, and let us investigate the matter anyhow."

They crept softly forward and that pounding upon the earth ceased as they advanced, and was followed by a snorting, sniffling sound.

"Just as I told you, Davy," suddenly burst from Harry's lips; "here's two horses all saddled and bridled for us. Mount, Davy, and we'll ride down to Detroit; we will, for a square fact. Whoa, Princel easy, now, ole steed," and he approached one of the restless animals and began caressing it. In a moment he had quieted its fears, then he untied it, and with but little difficulty mounted into the saddle.

Old Davy's horse was a little fractious, and as the old borderman had not been upon a horse's back for twenty years he deported himself somewhat awkwardly. With some difficulty, however, he finally got into the saddle, and then they resumed their journey.

Happy Harry could not refrain from an occasional outburst of merriment at the ludicrous figure of old Davy, doubled up and reeling to and fro on the animal's back like a monkey in a circus.

"Blast it, boy, why do you laff at me? A feller can't help gittin' scar—sick, I mean, on

account of the vessel's motion. Jist wait till I catch the hoss's step, and then I'll sway edzactly right every time."

"You're top-heavy, Davy; you are, for a fact."

"Ah, my boy! if you'd clumped around on foot as old Davy, you'd be top-heavy, too, under sich circumstances as these. But, never mind; I'll soon git ballasted, and then I'll show you a thing or two on hossback. It's not my fault that I'm reelin' around here; it's the hoss's fault; he won't walk square under me, that's what's the matter."

"You are like Jerry Jones when he got drunk and fell down. It wasn't on his account nor the liquor's, oh no, that he fell. He said that the earth was like an old wagon-wheel, and had lost its disk and got to wobblin' on its axis, and of course he couldn't keep his footin'."

"Well, Jerry wasn't fur from right," repeated Davy, affecting justification for his own awkward horsemanship.

They rode on as fast as the nature of the forest would admit, and about midnight struck the head-waters of a little creek flowing in a south-easterly course toward the Huron river.

"Do you know what stream this is, Davy?" Happy Harry questioned.

"It's Brownstown creek," replied the trapper. "It's 'bout twenty miles to its confluence with the Huron river, then it's twenty or thirty miles from there to Detroit."

"Can't we reach the fort without followin' the creek and river?"

"We can, yes; but then as it is night and the way uncertain and dangerous, we'll make time to stick to the water-courses as guides."

"All right, Davy; as you say," and they kept on down the stream.

They journeyed on until daylight, when they rode into the creek and watered their animals, then selected a grassy spot, drew rein and dismounted, to allow the animals to rest and graze awhile.

While reclining under a tree and partaking of the remnants of their supper, they were suddenly startled by the report of fire-arms far down the creek. The firing was sharp and vigorous for several minutes, then it ceased entirely.

"Something wrong down that way, Harry," declared Davy, with a dubious shake of the head; "surely the British haven't got in ahead of us and been attacked by our sojers."

"Impossible; the army could not have moved so rapidly with their heavy guns and baggage-wagons. It may, however, be a detachment of cavalry sent out in advance of the main column to reconnoiter. Or it may be a skirmish between the Americans and a band of Injins."

"We can soon find out by mountin' our critters and joggin' 'em friskily down that way."

"And we might jog into an ambuscade of Injins, too. A feller can't be too keeful, Davy, these war times. An Injin or Britisher is just liable to hop out of a bush as a wolf or deer, and we've got to feel carefully along."

"You know your business, so go ahead, just as you think proper."

They finished their breakfast, mounted their animals and rode on down the creek. The imprint of horses' hoofs in the yielding earth suddenly arrested their attention; and upon careful examination of the ground they found that a large body of horses had passed down the stream. They also examined the tracks and found that they had been made by iron-shod hoofs. They found such a material difference in the shape of the shoe and that of the animals they rode, that they were led to believe a party of American horsemen had gone down the creek that morning. If so, they had fallen in with a band of savages, which accounted for the firing.

"What do you still counsel, Harry?" asked Davy; "had we better keep on down the creek, or bend off to the right a leetle?"

"Keep right on down the Brownstown. We may fall in with a party of friends, and be able to make ourselves useful."

"Just as you say, Harry. I'm in for anything that'll not disgrace the American eagle. Anything that'll shed glory on old Cumby, I'm in for."

They pushed carefully on, and finally entered an opening in the forest of perhaps forty acres in area. On the opposite side of this clearing the keen eyes of our friend caught sight of something fluttering in the air above a clump of bushes. It required not a second glance to tell him what it was.

A low, suppressed cry of delight burst from Harry's lips, while old Davy Darrett swung his cap aloft and shouted at the top of his powerful lungs:

"Hurrah for the star-sprangled banner! the American eagle! and Hail Columbus, happy land!"

The sight of their country's flag waving so gracefully in the bright, morning sun, filled their breasts with renewed spirit and enthusiasm; and giving their animals the reins, they galloped forward.

Although they could see no one yet, they knew that beneath the folds of the flag they

would be greeted by friends and American patriots with

"Freedom's soil beneath their feet,
And freedom's banner waving o'er them."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE OLD BORDERMAN'S TEST.

As Happy Harry and old Davy continued to advance toward the camp, a man, in the uniform of a captain of the United States army, rode out of the woods and halted them.

"Who comes there?" he demanded, in a stentorian voice.

"Two doggone good American chaps," was old Davy's response. "I am ole David Darrett, hunter and trapper, and this ere fractional part of a man at my side is Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods."

"Advance, then," responded the officer. "You will report at once to Major Van Horne."

The two rode forward and were conducted into the timber where nearly two hundred mounted infantry were temporarily encamped. They were ordered to dismount at the edge of the camp, and while two men took charge of their animals, the captain conducted them to the commandant, whose quarters were under a low, branching tree.

Major Van Horne received them kindly. He knew them both by reputation, and so entertained no doubts of their loyalty. After having passed the usual compliments, the officer asked:

"What news have you from the North-west?"

"Nothin' good, major," replied Harry. "General Brock, with a lammin' big army, is in this territory, marchin' on Detroit, with old Tecumseh and his minions at his right. Fifty miles don't separate you from them this holy minute; it don't for a fact."

"Can this be possible?" exclaimed the major, startled by the information.

"It's a fact, major; I war a prisoner in the camp of the British, night before last, and so I know of what I'm speakin'. Before captured, I was an eavesdropper at an interview between General Brock and old Tecumseh, and heard 'em make their 'rangements. Oh, I tell you, major, it's goin' to be warm on the peninsula. They've gained admittance to the lakes with their boats, and, just a few nights ago, a party of us surprised and captured the little brig 'Scout,' with supplies for Brock's army. But then, major, this is not what I'm here for—in fact, I'm not here for anything. I'm on my way to Detroit with some documents of great interest to the American army."

"Ah, indeed! Is it possible that you are one of our spies?" asked Van Horne, in an undertone.

"I don't know what you'd call me, but I'm an American boy, and fightin' for yonder flag. You see, I captured, or rather played a sly trick on a British major t'other mornin', and got from him the paper I am now carrying to General Hull."

"Do you think it contains anything that would be of interest to me, Harry?"

"Not a doubt of it, major, for it is of interest to every loyal American; and I believe I'd better let you see it."

So saying, he pulled off his moccasin and with the point of his knife ripped a slit in the lining, from behind which he drew out a folded paper and handed it to Van Horne.

The major untolded it, and with the assistance of Harry, the whole secret was unraveled.

"Good heavens, Harry!" exclaimed the officer, as soon as it had been examined, "that paper must be forwarded to Hull immediately—without another hour's delay. It is of the most vital importance to the American army in the North-west. It is a key that will enable us to open the way to victory. It is the written plan of the English general's proposed campaign, and with this in our possession it will enable us to meet them, fully prepared. Yes, Harry, this must be forwarded at once. I will send a special messenger with it—an old ranger, who knows every foot of ground between here and Detroit, and who has the fleetest horse in the command. By noon he will deliver it at Detroit. But rest assured, Harry, that your part in this heroic deed shall receive full mention in my official report. Your patriotism and bravery in this matter shall not escape the notice of President Madison."

"Well, major, if this document is of so much value and importance as that, start your man for the fort at once."

The major summoned one Lieutenant Strahl, an old ranger, to whom he intrusted the paper, with orders to deliver it to General Hull at the earliest moment possible.

"I'll do my best toward it, major," replied the old ranger, bowing himself out of the commandant's presence.

In a few minutes he was mounted up on the fleetest horse in the command, and flying through the woods toward Detroit.

"Now, my friends," said Major Van Horne, turning to Harry and Davy, "you fellows must be tired and hungry. I will order you a bite of such as soldiers have to eat, especially on the march, then you can rest. Your horses

will receive proper attention, so you may consider yourselves guests in our camp, to exercise yourselves at pleasure."

"Thank you, major, for your kindness," replied Harry, "but will you permit me to inquire the cause of that firing we heard off here awhile ago?"

"Our advance-guard got into a brush with a party of savages, though nothing fatal, so far as we have learned, occurred."

"We heard the noise, but didn't know what it meant. But, major, I'm afraid if old Brock comes this way with his avalanche of sojers and Ingins, he'll gobble you all up."

"We expect to break camp by evening, at furthest. We are here to convoy a train of supplies, coming down the lake, to its destination south. A messenger arrived in camp this morning with information that the train would reach the creek about the middle of the day, or soon after. My only fears have been of the Indians, but if the British army is as close as you say, we may have trouble from their advance-guards before we get in. Have they cavalry?"

"Till you can't rest," was the laconic reply. "Then the chances are favorable for some fighting before we get back, if not before we get away from here. If I thought we were in danger, I would send to Colonel Miller for reinforcements."

"Well, major, if there's any fighting to do, count me and Belshazzar, my dog, in on it; and, I tell you, we're numerous, too, when it comes to fightin'; we'll figure up to about six common Englishmen, we will, for a square up and down fact."

"And chalk me down one, too, major," said old Davy; "I'm p'izen to red-coats and red-skins, and can fetch one further'n any other man on the peninsula."

"Have you anything to back that?" asked a stalwart borderman standing within ear-shot; "have you anything that says I can't beat any man in the camp on an off-hand shot? If ye have, spit it right out, and old Iron Hand'll cover it, and try you one, two, or as many shots as you want."

"Wal, stranger, I don't know what your caliber is; you look as though you might be real handy with a rifle," replied old Davy; "I'm no great shakes at shootin', I'll admit, but here's my rifle that says you can be beat."

"Let's shake on that, stranger," said Iron Hand, the scout, and the two frontiersmen clasped hands over the bet.

By this time no little excitement prevailed in consequence of what was likely to prove a source of amusement. The soldiers gathered around the two old bordermen, eager for the sport. They bet freely on the men, Iron Hand standing two to one against old Davy.

"You hear the bet, men?" Iron Hand exclaimed, turning to the soldiers, and upon receiving an affirmative reply, he continued, addressing Davy: "Now, friend Davy, choose your mark and distance—no difference to me what it is."

Davy hastily ran his eyes around him, up among the tree-tops, up at the sky, but shook his head in a dissatisfied manner. He could see nothing upon which to test the skill of Iron Hand, and for several moments stood in a sort of a "brown" study; then he turned to Major Van Horne, and asked:

"Major, how long have you been here in camp?"

"Not over two hours."

"I thought not."

"Don't back down, Davy, and try to talk the matter off," said Iron Hand.

"Never, Iron Hand," replied the old trapper, advancing to where his opponent stood, and pointing up among the branches at a little forked bough, quite conspicuous on account of its blood-red leaves; "you see that limb, don't you, with the red leaves?"

"I'd be blind if I didn't see it," replied Iron Hand.

"Wal, now, I'll select that as a target, and bet that if you can cut the left limb off with a bullet, I can cut the right limb off and draw blood—both with the same bullet."

"Durn sich a bet; I don't understand it," said Iron Hand. "Explain yer meanin'."

"Take me just as I say, and you'll get at the meanin'; I'll bet you I can shoot that left limb off and draw blood, and that you can't. That's plain enough."

A puzzled look mounted the faces of the soldiers, and they exchanged inquiring glances.

"Some 'sell' to that," began a bystander, but before he could finish the sentence, Iron Hand broke in:

"All right, Davy, I'll take you," and throwing his rifle to his shoulder, he fired, cutting the designated twig off as smooth as though it had been done with a knife.

"Well done," exclaimed old Davy, "and now here goes for blood," and he drew his long rifle to his shoulder and glanced along the barrel; but he did not fire. He changed his position—aimed again, and again shifted his position slightly, and then fired.

Simultaneous, almost, with the crash of the rifle, an unearthly shriek was heard out in the

tree-tops, a hundred yards, or more, from where they stood, and as the severed limb came fluttering to the earth, a human body went crashing down among the branches and fell, with a heavy thud, upon the ground.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BATTLE OF BROWNSTOWN CREEK.

THE soldiers, as well as Iron Hand himself, looked aghast.

Old Davy broke into a hearty laugh, for he well understood the result of his shot; he had killed a red-skin spy! He had discovered the warrior in a tree-top when looking around for a bird or an object upon which to test Iron Hand's marksmanship, and keeping the fact to himself, made the bet he did upon the strength of his discovery.

The savage had ensconced himself there before the command came up, in order to watch the movements of Van Horne, and to gain some knowledge of the strength of his force. He was found to be in war-paint, which was evidence of his having been on the war-path, and which also justified Davy in shooting him.

Although it was rather an extraordinary affair, and the bet made in the spirit of fun by the two bordermen, the stakes were awarded Davy, amid shouts of applause; and Iron Hand offered up his gun. But of course Davy refused to take it, saying:

"I'll loan it to you awhile, Iron Hand; take good care of it, for I'll bet it's an ole raker-from-taw; besides, I think you'll need it to plug British pink-coats with—there! by Jerusalem!"

The far-off report of a rifle sounded suddenly through the woods, starting every man.

"What can that mean?" asked Major Van Horne.

"More skrimmagin', I reckon," responded Iron Hand.

"Have you scouts out beyond the creek, major?" asked Happy Harry.

"We have picket-guards posted in the woods beyond the creek."

"I believe I'll make a little scout off that way, general, if you've no objection," the youth remarked.

"None, whatever."

Harry, accompanied by his dog, crossed the creek and plunged into the woods. Shortly after his departure Iron Hand and Davy went out to reconnoiter.

Happy Harry was gone an hour when he came running into camp, almost out of breath, his face flushed with wild excitement. He ran directly toward Major Van Horne's quarters, and was met by the commandant, who had been eagerly watching for his return.

"Great hoppin' hornits, major," the boy cried, "the British are comin'! A body of not less than two or three hundred infantry and cavalry, with one or two pieces of artillery, are within three miles of here this holy minute; they are, for a fact."

"Are you sure of this, Harry?" the major asked, in no little excitement.

"There's no denyin' it, major; it's a Gospel truth."

"Then we must prepare to meet them."

"Yes, and don't lose a minute, major, for the bloody varmints are comin' lickety-te-spilt."

Instantly the call to arms resounded through the camp. The rush of feet, the murmur of subdued voices, the command of officers, and the tramp of hooved feet succeeded the hitherto quiet of the camp.

The soldiers were eager for the conflict, each man believing that he was equal to two or three British. They were brave, reckless fellows, most of whom had been trained to Indian fighting, and would hear to no other alternative but to fight the advancing foe; and so Major Van Horne resolved to give battle.

A company of fifty men were detailed to take charge of the horses and act as a reserve. Then the main body forded the creek and took up a position behind the northern bank, which afforded an admirable shelter.

Scarcely had the Americans thus been posted when firing between their pickets and the enemies' advance-guard began. It was kept up for some time, sharp and decisive, when the American outposts were all driven rapidly back on the main body and compelled to seek shelter behind the bank.

A death-like stillness succeeded the disappearance of the soldiers behind the embankment. The enemy's advance-guard halted in the wood beyond sight. A hundred and fifty heads were ranged along just above the edge of the bank; the same number of gleaming rifles rested on the earth with their muzzles pointed northward, and still the same number of pairs of gleaming eyes watched for a glimpse of the foe.

Happy Harry and old Davy were there in the ranks, ready for the fray. None watched the coming of the foe with calmer courage than did the boy hero.

Not a word escaped the soldiers' lips. All was silent save the rippling of the creek over its stony bed and the soft murmur of the trees.

But, suddenly, the tramp of many feet and the crash of undergrowth were heard in the

woods. Then the gleam of bayonets in the bright sun, and the flash of the foe's scarlet uniform amid the green of the woods burst upon the view of the Americans. With steady tramp the enemy advanced toward the creek, and when only twenty paces from the bank the command to fire was given by Major Van Horne.

All along the American line a stream of fire spit forth, and a curtain of smoke rolled up between the foes as if to shut from view the scene of destruction that must have followed such a withering volley from the rifles of cool, determined soldiers.

The British discharged their muskets at the unexpected foe, then fell rapidly back under cover of the woods, leaving the ground strewn with dead and dying comrades.

The horrors of war were now, for the first time, fully presented to Happy Harry's eyes. His young heart shuddered at the sight of so many dead, and the agonizing screams and piteous moans, the horrible oaths and the fervent prayers of the wounded and dying.

Not an American had been injured, and the shout of triumph that pealed from their lips fairly shook the earth beneath them.

The enemy soon recovered from their first repulse, and, reinforced by a company of regulars that came up at this juncture, they again advanced. As they neared the edge of the woods they made a dash, with fixed bayonets, for the creek, intending to carry the American defense by storm; but they were again met by such a deadly fire that they were again driven back in disorder under cover of the woods.

Scores of their men went down before the withering volley. The front rank fell like grain before the sickle. The ground was strewn with English dead, and the cries of the wounded and the yells of the victors rent the air.

Harry heartily wished that the attack would not be repeated.

The English fell back some distance and again reformed their broken lines and filled up their thinned ranks from a company of mounted infantry that had been held back as a reserve.

A consultation of the British officers was now held, for some were in favor of renewing the attack and others of falling back and waiting the arrival of the entire army advancing under General Brock.

Said one favoring the latter movement:

"I believe old Hull's whole army is behind that bank."

"Impossible. There can't be over three hundred men," replied another.

"Can't we get a gun into position so as to rake the stream? I hate for five hundred of us strong to give up the battle to a hundred or two Yankees," said the general in command of the army.

"General, I assure you the Americans have twice our number behind that bank; with a reserve in the woods beyond; and probably half a dozen batteries ready to rake us should we succeed in making a stand on the bank. How do they know but what this is Brock's whole army? and if they suppose it was, two or three hundred men would not be battling with a thousand. Yes, general, there's more than three hundred Americans behind that bank."

"General," said a captain of infantry, stepping up to the commandant, "furnish me a horse and I will settle this matter—I will know whether there is a hundred or a thousand of the enemy behind that bank."

"That," replied the general, "is the very information we want, and there is my horse."

The captain turned, and leaping into the saddle gathered up the reins, and then dashed away through the woods toward the American lines. He rode boldly and rashly up to the very edge of the bank, and leaning forward in the stirrups, looked over the bank, and ran his burning, flashing eyes up and down the stream, saw all that he wished to with a sweeping glance—that there was but a handful of Americans behind the embankment. His eyes, as they swept along that gleaming line of orbs turned upon him, encountered those of Happy Harry. They even rested for a moment on those of the youth, for each one recognized the other.

The British officer was Captain Kirby Kale!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PRICE OF GLORY.

THE reckless Kirby Kale scarcely checked the speed of his horse, so quick did he wheel upon the bank, glance over the edge, then dash away toward the woods with his information. But before he had gone a dozen paces both he and his horse sunk to earth riddled with bullets.

Happy Harry saw him fall, and turning to Old Davy, who stood at his side, said:

"There, Davy, my dear friend, Long Beard, is safe."

Five minutes after the fall of Kirby Kale the British again advanced, reinforced by a large band of savages, whose blood-curdling yells did more to strike fear to the hearts of the Americans than the bristling bayonets of the English. The fight now became desperate. The enemy pressed on to the very muzzle of the American rifles, and a few succeeded in getting over the bank to meet a certain death. Major Van Horne's reserve coming up put the enemy to rout for the third time.

"Charge! Charge!" thundered the voice of the commander, as he saw the enemy turn and flee, and in an instant the Americans swarmed out from behind their breastworks and started in pursuit of the foe. But victory had not yet been purchased. The savages now, from their concealments, opened a deadly fire upon them, checking their advance, and giving the English a chance to rally and return to the conflict.

A terrible hand-to-hand encounter now ensued. Both sides fought desperately—one flushed with partial victory, the other with that desperation upon which life and victory are staked.

And Happy Harry was in the hottest of the struggle. Men fell around him on all sides. The terrible eyes of the enemy glared into his very face. He could see that awful look which the heat and excitement of battle gives to the human face and features. The soul was transformed to that of a maddened demon in each warrior. He seemed drawn on to battle by some fascination that he could not resist. Death appeared to have no horrors for him. He was past fear; he was literally elate with the combined horrors of battle and death. He took no thoughts of what he was doing.

Harry saw the color-bearer of the enemy pushing directly toward him with a drawn sword. He was a powerful man—a Hercules in stature and strength. His face was maddened and contorted by the horrors of battle. He fixed his glaring eyes upon the youth with a look that told his murderous intention.

"Shoot that color-bearer, Harry," cried old Davy Darrett, as he staggered and fell under the shock of a musket-ball that tore its way through his shoulder.

Harry drew his pistol and fired at the giant Englishman. The ball struck him square in the forehead. A quiver thrilled his great form. The glare of death fell like a cloud upon his face. He was virtually dead, but did not fall. The body continued to advance upon the boy—still obeying the impulse of the will now gone. A red spot appeared on the forehead where the bullet had entered; then the blood spurted out in little jets, the eyes glazed, the muscles relaxed their stony rigidity, and the body fell at the feet of the boy-soldier. Never until his dying-day did Harry forget the awful death-look of that man.

The youth grasped the colors from the bearer's lifeless hand, and at the same instant the orders for the retreat were sounded along the American lines. But the retreat began in disorder, and terminated in a wild panic. The Americans endeavored to rally behind the bank of the creek, but the enemy were so close upon them, and in such overwhelming odds that a stand was impossible, and the defeat became final to the American arms.*

Seeing how matters stood, Happy Harry, still clinging to the captured colors, ran for dear life. He soon reached the bank of the creek at a point where the high waters had, at one time, broken across an abrupt bend in the stream, leaving a narrow bank of earth standing out in the stream a few feet from shore. The water had eaten the dirt away from the base of this until its upper edges hung over two or three feet. There was no water at the time within three or four feet of this ridge of earth. Harry, as he came up, made a leap for this bank, but the distance was too long for him, and he landed at the base of the ridge. A soldier, more successful than he, succeeded in leaping upon it, and just as his feet left it in a bound for the opposite side, tons of the shelving top fell over upon Harry, completely burying him from human eyes!

THE Americans were completely routed. What at first had promised to be such a brilliant victory terminated in total defeat and the loss of many brave and noble men. But we will not enter into further details of this battle than is necessary to follow up the characters of our story.

That one could exist for a single moment beneath a pressure of two or three tons of earth is a question that no one would give a second thought. Nor did the British soldier who saw the earth fall upon the youth.

But Harry was far from being dead, notwithstanding the weight that was over him. He had fallen so close in against the base of the ridge that when the projecting top fell down a large space was left between the bottom of the wall and the dirt that fell, and in this space Harry lay. This narrow prison was closed at

the top, for the earth fell in one solid chunk, but at each end there was a small opening that admitted air and sound.

For awhile after the fall a cloud of stifling dust pervaded the youth's narrow prison, and it seemed as though he should surely suffocate; but this soon settled, and Harry was permitted to rejoice over his own miraculous escape only to bemoan the fate of the little army whose hopes had once been so buoyant.

He could hear the awful cries and moans of the wounded, the yells and shouts of the victorious British and savages, and the thunderous tramp of hoofs along the creek. But all sounds of the battle soon died away. Only the agonizing groans without reminded him that the dreadful conflict through which he had so recently passed was a stern reality.

The youth knew that he could not escape from his confinement before dark. He knew that the battlefield would be frequented throughout the whole day by the enemy in burying the dead and caring for the wounded. His safety lay in waiting the coming of night, and upon this he resolved at once, without a second thought.

He spent the long hours of waiting in reflection. He epitomized all the events of the past week, and recalled the faces that had figured therein. The noble face of Long Beard and the angelic Tempy stood out the most conspicuous. The hateful visages of Kirby Kale and Bill Mucklewee were the next most prominent, but the assurance that both these men were dead gave him relief. Then he recalled the events through which he had passed—his adventure in General Brock's camp; his narrow escape at old Davy's cabin; the battle; the first discharge of the American rifles; the groans of the dying; and that awful, awful look worn by the face of the color-bearer as he walked a lifeless corpse toward him!

Old Davy did not escape his thoughts. He remembered the last words he had heard the veteran borderman utter as he went down in battle; and then he wondered if he had died, or had been tramped to death beneath the feet of the victors and the horses. And last but not least, came the sudden thought of Belshazzar. Where was he? his faithful companion of years? Had he been slain? or had he been lost in the rout? The last time he had remembered seeing him was a few moments before the battle opened.

Thus musing, the hours wore away, and the first thing Harry knew he was growing sleepy. He had not slept for two or three nights. He had been kept awake by excitement and activity, and so he resolved to take a nap. Resting his head upon his arm he soon became lost in the oblivion of sleep. When he awoke it seemed as though he had been sleeping a week. He knew however, that such could not be the case; but he was satisfied that hours had passed, and that it was then far in the night.

He listened for some sound without, but not the slightest noise could be heard unless it was the soft, creeping ripple of the water in the creek. This satisfied him that the enemy had all retired from the battlefield, if not from the vicinity; and he at once began to entertain thoughts of attempting his release. But to his horror and surprise he heard a slight noise outside just as he was about to begin operations. He listened closely, and discovered that something or somebody was digging into the bank that covered him! He could distinctly hear a kind of scratching noise that grew louder and louder each moment, and which left no doubt in the boy's mind but that search was being made for him, either by a friend or foe, who had seen him fall and buried.

A horrible suspense took possession of him. He remained quiet, listening with bated breath. A great lump came up in his throat when he felt particles of dirt crumbling down upon him. It told him that the digger had made his way through the wall that separated him from the outer world. He could now see the open, starry sky through the hole made by the unknown. He could see a dark object near the opening outside, and could hear a noise like the low panting of an animal. He happened to think of his dog. In a low tone he called him by name. Instantly the dark object outside thrust itself into the hole and uttered a low whine.

Harry's heart gave a great bound, and he could scarcely suppress a cry of joy. It was his faithful friend, Belshazzar, true enough, who by some unaccountable means had sought out his young master's concealment.

The youth soon enlarged the hole made by the dog sufficient for his body to pass through. Then he thrust his head and shoulders out and listened, at the same time caressing the dog.

He heard a slow, measured footstep on the opposite shore, and peering through the night he saw the outlines of a British sentinel pacing to and fro along the bank. By this he knew he was inside the enemy's lines, unless they had changed their position south of the creek, and that great danger would attend his proposed attempt at escape.

He knew the moon would soon be up, for it was already growing light in the east. He saw that that moment was the best to act, during

the darkness which precedes the rising of the moon, and securing the English flag which he had captured in battle about his person, he crept out of his cell, and upon his hands and knees made his way to the water's edge.

He had decided to creep down the creek, wade where he could not crawl on hands and knees, and swim where he could not wade, believing that the ripple of the water would drown all sounds he might make.

Without a moment's hesitation he crept into the water and began moving slowly down the stream, using his utmost precaution.

Success attended his efforts, and in less than an hour he had run the gantlet of the enemy's picket and found himself safe beyond their lines. But again he found himself without gun or pistol, and he really felt that he was at the mercy of any foe. Still, he had his friend, Belshazzar, who was more than a match for any one man, and trusting to his keen instinct he pushed on down the creek.

He had not gone over half a mile when the dog came to a sudden stop, and uttered a low, sniffling whine. Harry knew he had discovered something, and stopped.

He heard a slight noise in the bushes before them, and a heavy sigh. The dog stood still, wagging his tail and with his nose pointed directly ahead; and as Harry continued to listen, he heard that heavy breathing of some one or something repeated.

The lad began to think the matter over, and finally wondered if it could be some wounded soldier who had crept away unobserved from the battlefield and concealed himself there. He became so impressed with the belief that this was the case, as he thought the matter calmly over, that he could not think of leaving without knowing positively, and so, in a low tone, he asked:

"Hullo! anybody in that thicket?"

An almost deathly silence followed. It lasted nearly a minute, when a voice in the thicket answered:

"Speak ag'in, stranger; I sw'ar I b'lieve I war right."

"Yes, you were right, Davy. Come out," responded Harry, and the old trapper, weak and suffering from a terrible wound, staggered out of the thicket.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A LONELY GRAVE IN THE FOREST.

"LET me lean upon you, Harry; I'm weak—weaker than water," said Davy Darrett, as he came out of the thicket and approached the little hero.

"Yes, let me help you, Davy," replied the boy, "for I know you are badly hurt. I saw you fall, and was afraid I would never see you again."

"Ah! that was a terrible battle, Harry, a terrible battle. Our men should never have left their intrenchments. I got a terrible blow, but it wasn't half as bad as some others got. Poor Iron Hand lay dying as I passed him. He reached out his hand, and said, 'Good-by, Davy,' then he caught sight of my shattered arm, and continued: 'I'll tell 'em you're comin' soon.' He knowed I couldn't live."

"My God, Davy! are you hurt that bad?" cried the boy.

"Hurt that bad? why, lad, I am literally dying by inches."

"Oh, no, Davy," replied Harry, persistently, and with a tremor in his voice; "you are not hurt that bad."

"Well, I hope not, Harry; but don't worry 'bout me."

"Lean upon me heavier, Davy; don't hesitate, for I am stout, you know. Let me help you to a place of greater security. The Indians are no doubt scouting through the woods after stragglers, and they may find you."

"They have found me already, Harry, but I was dead then. Oh, but this is a cruel, cruel world, lad. Here I've fought along fifty years or more and have nothin' to lose, and everything in the world to gain. I've seen but a few sunshiny days in all these years. The outside world has been dull to me, in one sense, but in another I've made it lively. Ah, Harry, I can go no furdur! I must sit down and rest in this little glade. It would be a nice place for a grave, lad."

"Oh, don't don't give up, Davy—don't say die!" pleaded the youth.

They were now in the center of a little glade or natural opening in the dense woods. The moon was up, and her mellow rays fell full and bright upon the old man and boy.

The latter started at sight of his companion's terrible aspect. His face and body were covered with coagulated blood. His eyes were hollow and sunken. His left arm hung limp and lifeless at his side.

"Davy!" cried Harry, "you are worse than you appear. You have been keeping the truth from me—where did all that blood come from on your face and breast?"

"From my arm, Harry, from my arm," replied the old man, rather evasively; "here—right here, let me sit down and rest, lad."

*This conflict, known in history as the Battle of Brownstown, was fought August 5th, 1812. The defeat of Van Horne was, however, retrieved a few days later on the same ground by a brilliant victory of the Americans under Col. Miller.

Harry eased him carefully down to a seat upon the ground, with his back against the trunk of a fallen tree.

"There, there, that is better, Harry," he said, resting his head back upon the log.

"Then, let me dress your wounded arm, Davy. I have a silken flag, here, that I captured from the English, and it will be the very thing to bind up your wounds with."

"Better save the flag, Harry," replied old Davy; "it'll be a big thing for you. To capture an enemy's colors is a great thing, lad. They speak about such things in history, so don't throw it away on me."

"I care nothing for the honor of kapterin' the flag, compared with my desire for your comfort, Davy."

"You can do me but little good, lad, but, that you may feel that you done all you could for me, you may bind up my arm."

"Davy, you don't really believe you're goin' to die, do you?"

"I'll never see the sun rise again, lad—no, never!"

"You are disheartened and feeling bad, Davy. You must not die—you have been my best friend these many years, and I cannot give you up."

"I know I have been your friend, Harry, and I never told you why I liked you so well, but now I might as well tell you. I used to love your mother, lad. When I was a young man of twenty, I had a smatterin' of education. I could read and write, and went in the best society. Then I loved Mary Grayson, a pretty, modest girl of eighteen, and I guess she liked me. But the fates war against us. A villain came in between us, and made me what I am. He was your father, was Ishmael Wilde. He won Mary away from me and married her, and I bumbled up and put off to the woods and became a hunter. Then, a year or two after they were wed, you war born. Your father treated Mary very unkind, and one day she died when you war four years old. You war then left with the family of an old hunter, of whom you received many valuable lessons in woodcraft and Ingin-fighting. Your father was killed by the Ingins, and the old hunter's wife dyin' and his gal marryin', left you alone in the world again. But all this time I'd been keepin' a watch on you, and when I see'd you war without a home again, I induced you to take up your abode with me, where you've staid a good many years, off and on. You have been a good boy, Harry, with all the virtues of your dead mother; and this is why I loved you as though you were my own boy."

Harry burst into tears as he listened to this story of his parentage. It was the first time he remembered of ever having heard of his early life. He knew that the family in which he had been raised was not his own; nevertheless he loved its members as dearly as though they had been near kindred.

Carefully as he could, under the circumstances, the lad bandaged the wounded arm of the old borderman, and when completed he said:

"Now, Davy, let me take your coon-skin cap and I will run down to the creek and bring you up a sup of water in it. You must be feverish."

"No, no, don't move my cap, Harry, till after I'm gone. My head will burst, it aches so, if you remove the cap. It serves as a bandage, and oh, if it was an iron hoop it would feel much better! Just sit down, Harry; it won't last long. The clouds are breakin' away now, and out of them I see a snow-white throne appear—ah! me; ah! me; lean my head back against the log, lad—don't move the cap—there! there! I feel easier—much easier! Oh, that radiant light! Who says there's not hope for all beyond this life? He who does, maligns God's mercy, for God is kind and just. He makes the good and makes the wicked. He has an object in it, for His ways are inscrutable. He will be unmerciful to none—we are the offsprings of His will, and He doeth all things well—Harry, Harry! where are you, boy?"

"Here, Davy, here, by you," said the lad, kneeling by the old man's side.

"Ah, there's a mist gatherin' over my eyes—I can't see you, and my sight never failed before. But, Harry, don't take off my cap till I'm dead—bury me here—right here in this glade, Harry. The rush of the creek and the moan of the woods won't disturb my slumber—I'll sleep here sweetly—Harry, here—your hand—fare—well, lad, fare—"

He rattled in the throat; his head fell forward upon his breast, and all that was mortal of Davy Darrett had returned to its Maker.

Happy Harry sat down upon the log by Davy's side and burst into tears. He sobbed as though his heart was broken. He had lost a friend—a dear friend. The scene was sad and solemn. The deep, dark wood, the little moonlit glade, the weeping boy, the couchant dog, the deep and awful silence of night—all, in the presence of death—conspired to make the occasion one of the deepest solemnity.

It was some time before the lad could shake off the dread and sorrow that had settled over his young spirit. When he did, he removed

Davy's cap and beheld a spectacle that sent a shudder to his heart. Davy had been scalped! The Indians had found him, true enough, which accounted for his refusal to have his cap removed.

"Poor Davy! how he must have suffered!" the lad murmured; "but he is out of this misery, and I can do nothin' but—"

He burst into tears again, but after awhile he rallied, and taking Davy's knife, began the laborious task of cutting out a grave. He cut and sliced away the sod, then put Belshazzar to digging. Thus the two together finally accomplished the work, and just as the sun looked over the eastern forest-tops, Harry, with sorrowful heart and tearful eyes, turned away from the lonely grave of his beloved friend, Davy Darrett.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AS IT SHOULD BE.

As he turned away from the grave of Davy Darrett, Happy Harry broke into a run as if to keep down the terrible emotions of sorrow struggling in his breast for expression.

When a mile or two away he stopped to think whither he was going. He knew by the course of the Brownstown creek and the position of the sun, where the points of the compass were. But he wished to reach some point of safety. He remembered where Van Horne had told him that Colonel Miller was encamped with a large party of troops, and so at once set out toward that point.

He reached the camp during the day in an almost exhausted condition. But, when it became known in the camp who he was, every kindness in the power of the soldiers was shown him, and by the following day he was himself again.

The news of Van Horne's defeat preceded Harry to Miller's command, and the colonel at once made preparations to move against the enemy. On the following day he took up his line of march, and the same day engaged the British and Indians in a desperate struggle, gaining a decisive victory over them, as already related.

Harry accompanied the little army and passed through the hottest of the battle without a scratch, fighting side by side with veterans of the army.

On the day following this second battle, the youth took his departure for Laketown, where he had left Long Beard and his daughters. And it was the happiest moment of his life when he broke to the giant the news of Kirby Kale's death in battle, and received the blessings of the father and daughters for the services he had rendered them in the hours of trial and trouble.

From this time on dated a new era in the life of the persecuted Long Beard and his fair daughters. With the chief instigator of all his troubles forever silent he had nothing further to fear. He never returned to England but made America his adopted home, and all through the war of 1812 he served the American cause in the capacity of a scout, along with Happy Harry.

Happy Harry never met with the Princess Eelcelah again. He even never heard of her, and always believed, from certain evidences, that she had been murdered at the Pleiades Islands after her return from the brig-of-war the day she took Tempy to her friends aboard the vessel. If she had been killed, Bill Mucklewee had done the deed in retaliation for her turning upon him that day with his own pistol and driving him out of the canoe into the lake.

And now comes the denouement of our story, which will no doubt be a surprise to the reader. Captain Robert Rankin took command of his company as soon as he had recovered from his injuries received that memorable night, and during the time that he was absent from Tempy, the infatuation that had sprung up between them at the Pleiades died gradually out. After each one had been placed amid different surroundings, the romance of his and her first meeting lost its charms.

Tempy's was but a childish attachment, and the captain's that of a gallant man for a gallant child. Had they been permitted a more intimate acquaintance and years of courtship this attachment would no doubt have ripened into pure love. But, the hand of fate willed it otherwise, since they were no more than common mortals, susceptible of all the changes that young lives are heir to.

They had never been betrothed, so there was no violation of either's words or honor, in their disavowal and forgetfulness of their first admiration.

And so, shortly after the war ended, Colonel Rankin married a young lady of Detroit; and some five years later, Happy Harry, then a noble specimen of manhood, and captain in the army, married the lovely Tempy, his first and only love.

THE END.

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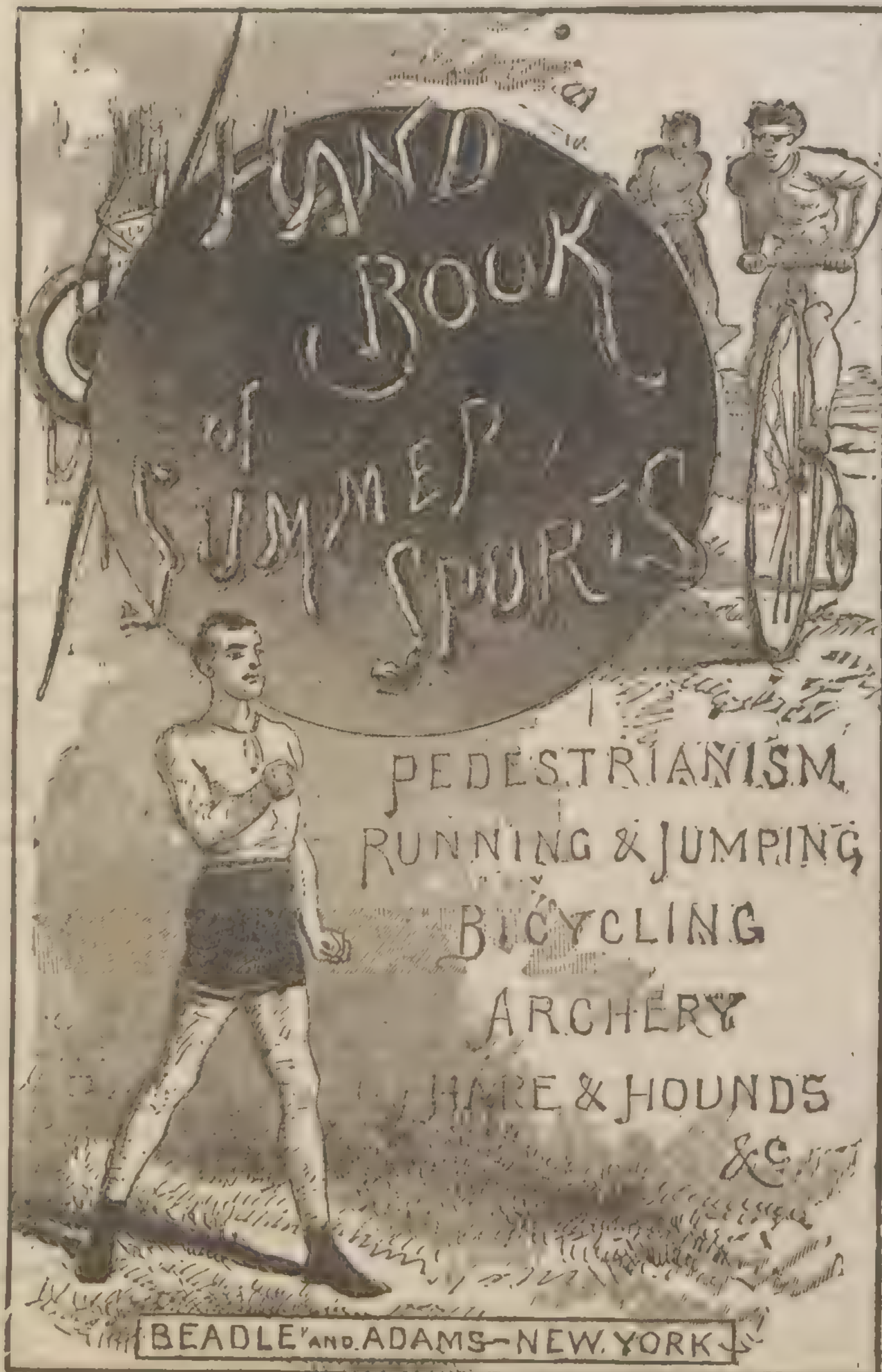
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